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# SCRUTINY

## A Quarterly Review

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# 'FIRST BROADCAST PERFORMANCE'

The most important musical event of the last quarter has undoubtedly been the first broadcast performance of Bela Bartók's *Divertimento for strings*. Almost all other contemporary music pales into fumbling insignificance besides such assured mastery, such fiery vitality and such freshness of outlook which is yet perfectly reconcilable with tradition. If the work is, as its name implies, relatively easy to listen to compared with (say) the later Bartók quartets, this is only because it is written with such Mozartian clarity and with a technical ingenuity that has come to function instinctively, not because it deals with ranges of experience that are in any way superficial.

The slow movement is, I would say, among the two or three most profound structures in twentieth-century music, and although powerfully dissonant and startlingly original in the very texture of its sound is never *outré* because its organism is (like the whole work) essentially melodic and polyphonic, even the dissonances being melodic in that they are created by a logical technique of unresolved appoggiaturas based on a telescoping of the idiom of the eighteenth century, whereby a passing note may become identified with the tone to which it might be expected to resolve. (One of the consequences of this procedure is an elastic ambivalence between the major and minor tonality and triad). Traces of the rhythmic complexity and modal formulae of Magyar folk-music in the melodic material are reconciled with this European classicism, but the idiom is no longer one that can be discussed in terms of the influence of this or that: henceforth it exists in its own right as a technique which, if more 'personal' than, is as consummately realized as, the idiom of Mozart or of Bach. Not only the slow movement, but also the intensely concentrated development of the first movement and the tumultuous, but always strictly controlled, energy of the finale seem to have, unlike the noisily self-advertising 'vitality' of much contemporary music, something that one can only call a spiritual foundation, so that the counterpoint communicates an *elation* comparable with that produced in the listener by the greater fugues of Bach. Considering, comparatively, the social

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and spiritual climate in which Bartók has lived and worked his achievement may seem scarcely less remarkable; though naturally this doesn't therefore mean that Bartók equals Bach. It is sufficient that we can say that Bartók is certainly a major composer in European history, and probably the greatest composer now actively creative.

I hope the work, which was splendidly played, will soon be heard again and that Decca, or so other enterprising company, will give us a recorded version. Since the music is so immediately impressive, becomes even more so with study, and is so masterfully conceived for the congenially recording medium of string orchestra, I am sure that this company would not lose money, besides performing a cultural service of the utmost importance. The score has been published by Boosey and Hawkes, price 15/-.

I am afraid that the much heralded first English performance of the Walton *Violin Concerto*[1] was one of the things that, compared with the Bartók, looked decidedly off-colour. The opening and coda of the first movement, and the second subject of the finale, were very beautiful in their fluid lyrical expansions of diatonicism but said nothing of consequence that Walton hadn't said already in the *Viola Concerto* which still remains, I think, his most convincing work. The noisy Elgarian climaxes manifested Walton's old failing in that logical polyphonic evolution tends to dissipate, at the most crucial moments, into rhetoric; and the Scherzo, modelled closely on that of the viola concerto, completely lacked the earlier work's delicate nervous agility and seemed to me pedestrian and trite. (The celebrated ' neapolitan ' trio, besides being fatuous in itself, is in the context a glaring inconsistency of style that Walton would never have perpetrated in the days of the viola work). Whereas vitality glows in every detail, however apparently trivial, that makes up the self-subsistent Bartók creation, one feels that there is vitality, and that necessarily of an inferior order, only in isolated patches of Walton's concerto while the rest, if it does not exactly express feelings at second-hand, at least expresses feelings that have been so long in Mr. Walton's hands that he has grown to accept them as habit rather than as experience.

This emotional staleness, which is fleeting in the concerto,

[1]A violin and piano score is published by the Oxford Press, price 7/6.

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dominated entirely an appalling production called *Scapino,* which was also given its first broadcast performance. Here was none of that youthful jocularity, effectively crude in line and rhythm, which had marked the early, and ostensibly comparable, *Portsmouth Point*: this music had no more meaning for the contemporary world than a nineteenth-century tone poem without even the synthetic vigour of the later Strauss. The programme note informed us that the work was ' fresh and witty.' Since there was nothing in the musical ideas that could conceivably be graced with either of these epithets, nothing, indeed, that showed a glimmer of distinction of any kind, I can only conclude that there must be some exquisite risibility in the quaint percussive effect or the squawk of an over-blown trumpet that regrettably escapes me. If Mr. Walton wants to know what wit in a musical idiom really means he should listen to Mr. Tippett's *Fantasy Sonata* (see page 309), or even at a more superficial level, to his own *Façade:* and then throw *Scapino* on the fire. One must think very gratefully of the Viola Concerto, and very hard of the Battle of Vittoria, for this piece was enough to ruin most composers' reputations.

Although untrumpeted, the first broadcast performance of the second set of Edmund Rubbra's *Spenser Sonnets* for voice and string quartet was, I think, a more significant event in English musical history than the performance of the Walton works. I have previously pointed out how Rubbra's imagination seems to function most freely when he is preoccupied with a tough technical proposition, and the problem which he has tackled here is how to set a verbal text in the most sensitive way possible with reference to the exigencies of language, while at the same time sublimating the contour of his line beyond declamation to a sustained and musically organized lyricism. There is very little contemporary music that could be put beside *Like as the culver* (the third of these sonnets) for length and plasticity of line which is not mere rhapsody but a self-contained lyrical and vocal structure. I commend this song to the majority of contemporary composers who have forgotten, or who never knew, what the element of line in musical speech ought to be; it is noble, magnificent, and sad, and if it reminds us a little of the line in some of van Dieren's larger vocal works, that is not because it is any the less Rubbra's unique creation but merely because both van Dieren and Rubbra were concerned with the pro-

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blem of lyricism and the English language and because their technical, if not spiritual, solutions were based on the same polyphonic principles. Here, as in Rubbra's earlier series of Spenser sonnets, as in van Dieren's setting of the same poet, as (for that matter) in the Tudor air and madrigal, the peaks of the lyricism coincide with the expressive interpretation of the most impassioned passages of the text (note for instance the marvellous efflorescence of line on the word ' entangling '); here again the idiom extends, but never denies, the modal fundamentals of vocal writing as established in the sixteenth century, with their attendant rhythmic and tonal fluidity.

While Rubbra's command of vocal lyricism is the essence of his genius, I believe that it is only in his symphonic work—in the manner in which he applies his lyrical gift to the symphonic problem—that we can realize the importance of his contribution. Rubbra is that rare phenomenon, a contemporary composer who naturally does his musical thinking on an extended scale, and apart from *Like as the culver* the sonnets are perhaps more interesting for the light they throw on the symphonies, than intrinsically. Although superlatively well written for the voice and although an entirely personal creation apart from one or two reminiscent-sounding passages which perhaps can be traced back rather to the nature of the English language than to the direct influence of Vaughan Williams. the sonnets, no doubt inevitably, lack the richness and variety of emotional temper that characterizes the symphonies. But if the Spenser Sonnets aren't such assured and classic masterpieces we must remember that Rubbra's teacher, Gustav Holst, spent the greater part of his creative career trying to solve the problem of the English musical idiom and the English language[2] and never, I think, came as close to a solution as does Rubbra in his best vocal work: all those who are interested in English music and who try to create it, should certainly study the Sonnets, along with the finest music of Holst, as inspiringly moving and honest statements of the fundamental issues involved.

W.H.M.

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[2]I have written further on this subject in an article on *Holst and the English Language*, published in *The Music Review*, August, 1941.

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# THE AMBIGUITY OF 'MEASURE FOR MEASURE'

## I.

IT is probably true to say that *Measure for Measure* is that play of Shakespeare's which has caused most readers the greatest sense of strain and mental discomfort. 'More labour than elegance' was Dr. Johnson's way of expressing his sense of something forced in 'the grave scenes' (he found 'the light or comic part . . . very natural and pleasing'), whilst to Coleridge the whole play was 'painful,' and even, a few years later, 'hateful, though Shakespearean throughout.' The most obvious reason for this discomfort is to be found in the conflicting attitudes towards the main characters that seem to be forced upon us, and it is easy to list questions of personal conduct for which it is impossible to find a simple answer. (What, to take one example, are we to think of Isabella? Is she the embodiment of a chaste serenity, or is she, like Angelo, an illustration of the frosty lack of sympathy of a self-regarding puritanism?) Hazlitt's explanation of the painful impression created by the play, that 'our sympathies are repulsed and defeated in all directions,' is, however, only part of the truth. It is not merely that the play is a comedy, so that the 'general system of cross-purposes between the feelings of the different characters and the sympathy of the reader' can be in part attributed to the needs of the plot—complication, suspense and a conventionally happy ending; the strain and conflict goes much deeper than that, being in fact embedded in the themes of which the characters are made the mouthpiece.

Like many other Elizabethan plays, *Measure for Measure* has an obvious relation to the old Moralities. It is too lively and dramatic—too Elizabethan—to be considered merely as a homiletic debate, but it turns, in its own way, on certain moral problems, the nature of which is indicated by the recurrent use of the words 'scope,' 'liberty' and 'restraint.' What, Shakespeare seems to ask, is the relation between natural impulse and individual

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liberty on the one hand, and self-restraint and public law on the other?

The mainspring of the action is of course the sexual instinct: Claudio is condemned ' for getting Madam Julietta with child,' Angelo discovers the force of suppressed impulse, and most of the lesser characters seem to have no other occupation and few other topics of conversation but sex. Angelo on the one hand and Mrs. Overdone and her clients on the other represent the extremes of suppression and licence, and towards them Shakespeare's attitude is clear. The figure of Angelo, although a sketch rather than a developed character study, is the admitted success of the play. In few but firm lines we are made aware that his boasted self-control is not only a matter of conscious will (' What I will not, that I cannot do '), but of a will taut and strained. The Duke speaks of him as ' a man of stricture and firm abstinence,' and the unfamiliarity of the word, ' stricture,' ensures that its derivation from *stringere,* to bind together or to strain, shall contribute to the meaning of the line. In his ' gravity ' (' Wherein, let no man hear me, I take pride ') there is an unpleasantly self-conscious element—summed up in Claudio's exclamation ' The prenzy Angelo!'[1]—which relates him to the objects of Shakespeare's irony in the sonnet about ' liles that fester ' :

> Unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow:
> They rightly do inherit heaven's graces,
> And husband nature's riches from expense.
> They are the lords and owners of their faces,
> Others, but stewards of their excellence.

It is the unnaturalness and rigidity of his ideal that is insisted on. That it is unnatural is stressed not only by Lucio—' this ungenitured agent will unpeople the province with continency; sparrows must not build in his house-eaves because they are lecherous '—but by the Duke:

> Lord Angelo is precise;
> Stands at a guard with envy; scarce confesses
> That his blood flows, or that his appetite
> Is more to bread than stone.

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[1] 'Prenzy '—Burns's ' primsie.'

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Once the precarious balance is upset it is the despised ' blood '—an uncontrolled and unrelated sensual impulse—that runs away with him:

> I have begun,
> And now I give my sensual race the rein:
> Fit thy consent to my sharp appetite . . .

His lust, like his forced chastity, is felt as something excessive, urgent and disproportionate in its demands:

> Why does my blood thus muster to my heart,
> Making both it unable for itself,
> And dispossessing all my other parts
> Of necessary fitness?

And the relation between the two extremes is further emphasized by the gratuitous cruelty of his demands on Isabella:

> redeem thy brother
> By yielding up thy body to my will,
> Or else he must not only die the death,
> But thy unkindness shall his death draw out
> To lingering sufferance;

for the savagery of this had been foreshadowed, before his own temptation, not only in his peremptory harshness to Juliet (II, ii), but in the sadism of his parting words to Escalus, when the latter was about to try the offenders from the suburbs: ' I'll take my leave . . . Hoping you'll find good cause to whip them all.'

Lucio and his associates, on the other hand, follow their impulses without scruple or restraint. They have a natural vitality, expressing itself at times in a certain raciness of comment (' Heaven grant us its peace, but not the King of Hungary's '); and it is the ' fantastic ' Lucio who urges the easily discouraged Isabella to further efforts to save her brother's life. ' Those pleasant persons '—as Hazlitt calls them—Lucio, Pompey and Froth, are often referred to as an example of Shakespeare's sympathy for scoundrels; but although we are not required to get up any moral steam about their vices, the artistic handling is cool and clear. The note of frothy triviality, struck in the first conversation between Lucio and ' two other like gentlemen ' (I, ii), is never absent from their talk for

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long. They sufficiently represent the ' scope ' or ' liberty ' that, it is postulated, has made ' Vienna ' what it is.

Neither Angelo nor the traffickers in sex are the source of the sense of uneasiness that we are trying to track down. It is Claudio —who is scarcely a ' character ' at all, and who stands between the two extremes—who seems to spring from feelings at war with themselves, and it is in considering the nature of his offence that one feels most perplexity. Soon after his first appearance, led by a gaoler, he is accosted by Lucio:

*Lucio*: Why how now, Claudio! Whence comes this restraint?

*Claudio*: From too much liberty, my Lucio, liberty:
As surfeit is the father of much fast,
So every scope by the immoderate use
Turns to restraint. Our natures do pursue,
Like rats that ravin down their proper bane,
A thirsty evil, and when we drink we die.

*Lucio*: If I could speak so wisely under an arrest, I would send for certain of my creditors. And yet, to say the truth, I had as lief have the foppery of freedom as the mortality of imprisonment. What's thy offence, Claudio?

*Claudio*: What but to speak of would offend again.

*Lucio*: What, is it murder?

*Claudio*: No.

*Lucio*: Lechery?

*Claudio*: Call it so.

That Shakespeare was aware of an element of sententiousness in Claudio's words is shown by Lucio's brisk rejoinders. The emphasis has, too, an obvious dramatic function, for by suggesting that the offence was indeed grave it makes the penalty seem less fantastic; and in the theatre that is probably all one notices in the swift transition to more explicit exposition. But on coming back to the lines with fuller knowledge of what is involved it is impossible to avoid the impression of something odd and inappropriate. Apart

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from the fact that Claudio was ' contracted '[2] to Juliet, he does not seem to have ' surfeited,' and he was certainly not a libertine: his ' entertainment ' with Juliet was, we learn, ' most mutual '—they were in love with each other—a fact that is emphasized again later (II, iii, 24-28), when the Duke makes it a matter of special reproach to Juliet: ' Then was your sin of heavier kind than his.' And consider the simile by which Claudio is made to express feelings prompted, presumably, by his relations with the woman who—except for ' the denunciation . . . of outward order '—is ' fast my wife ':—

> Our natures do pursue,
> Like rats that ravin down their proper bane,
> A thirsty evil, and when we drink we die.

The illustrative comparison has, we notice, three stages: (i) rats ' ravin down ' poison, (ii) which makes them thirsty, (iii) so they drink and—the poison taking effect—die. But the human parallel has, it seems, only two stages: prompted by desire, men quench their ' thirsty evil ' in the sexual act and—by the terms of the new proclamation—pay the penalty of death. The act of ravening down the bane or poison is thus left on our hands, and the only way we can dispose of it is by assuming that ' our natures ' have no need to ' pursue ' their ' thirsty evils ' for it is implanted in them by the mere fact of being human. This of course is pedantry and—you may say—irrelevant pedantry, for Shakespeare's similes do not usually demand a detailed, point by point, examination, and the confusion between desire (thirst) and that from which desire springs does not lessen the general effect. The fact remains, however, that there is some slight dislocation or confusion of feeling, comparable, it seems to me, to the wider confusion of Sonnet 129, ' An expense of spirit in a waste of shame . . . ' (for not even the excellent analysis by Robert Graves and Laura Riding in their *Survey of Modernist Poetry*, pp. 63-81, can make me feel that the sonnet

[2]Elizabethan matrimonial law was a nasty tangle on this subject. The simplest explanation is that given by Pollock and Maitland. *A History of English Law*, Vol. II, pp. 383ff. The curious may consult Henry Swinburne's *A Treatise of Spousals* (1686, but written c. 1600).

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forms a coherent whole). And even if you accept the simile as completely satisfactory, nothing can prevent ' our natures ' from receiving some share of the animus conveyed by ' ravin,' a word in any case more appropriate to lust than to love, and so used by Shakespeare in *Cymbeline:*

> The cloyed will—
> That satiate yet unsatisfied desire, that tub
> Both fill'd and running—ravening first the lamb,
> Longs after for the garbage.

The sentiments expressed here concerning what, compared with Angelo's abstinence and Lucio's sexuality, looks like a natural relationship, are not the only ones voiced in the course of the play. Shakespeare in fact dramatizes various attitudes, and one would say that our estimate of their relative validity depended on our sense of the character embodying them were it not that some of the characters are themselves either ambiguous or without much dramatic substance. Angelo's unqualified contempt for Juliet—

> See you the fornicatress be remov'd:
> Let her have needful, but not lavish, means

—is sufficiently ' placed,' as are Pompey's remarks about ' the merriest usury '; and Lucio, embodying a vulgar flippancy that blurs all distinctions, is obviously not disinterested when, pleading for ' a little more lenity to lechery,' he complains of Angelo, ' What a ruthless thing is this in him, for the rebellion of a codpiece to take away the life of a man!' But we can feel no such certainty about the Duke or Isabella, who are sure enough of themselves: each of them is disposed to severity towards ' the sin ' (II, iv, 28-36; III, i, 148) of Claudio and Juliet, and the Duke seems to regard it as an instance of the ' corruption ' that boils and bubbles in the state: ' It is too general a vice, and severity must cure it ' (III, ii, 103). To Escalus who, so far as he is anything, is simply a wise counsellor, the ' fault ' (II, i, 40) is venial; and the humane Provost describes Claudio as,

> a young man
> More fit to do another such offence,
> Than die for this. (II, iii, 13-15)

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Yet even in the Provost's sympathy there are overtones from a different range of feelings, and the excuse he finds for Claudio, ' He hath but as offended in a dream ' (II, ii, 4), seems to echo once more the sonnet on lust:

> Made in pursuit and in possession so,
> Had, having, and in quest, to have extreme,
> A bliss in proof and prov'd and very woe,
> Before a joy propos'd behind a dream.

The play of course is only ' about ' Claudio to the extent that he is the central figure of the plot; he is not consistently *created*, and he only lives in the intensity of his plea for life.[3] But I think it is the slight uncertainty of attitude in Shakespeare's handling of him that explains some part, at least, of the play's disturbing effect. Shakespeare, we know, had a deep sense of the human worth of tradition and traditional morality, but his plays do not rely on any accepted scheme of values. Their morality (if we call it that) springs from the unshrinking exploration of—the phrase is Marston's—' what men were, and are,' and the standard is, as we say loosely, nature itself. In the period immediately preceding the greatest plays—the period of *Measure for Measure, Troilus and Cressida, Hamlet* and perhaps some of the Sonnets—analysis is not completely pure, and an emotional bias seems to blur some of the natural, positive values which in *Macbeth* or *Lear* are as vividly realized as the vision of evil.

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[3]In a scene (III, i) which, it is worth noticing, reflects once more the conflict running through the play between the claims of ' reason ' on the one hand and of instinct and instinctive sympathy on the other. The Duke's speech, ' Reason thus with life . . . ', is frigid and unconvincing because (except for three fine lines) it ignores the reality of emotion; Claudio's retort to the equally ' reasonable ' Isabella, ' Ay, but to die, and go we know not where . . . ', though magnificent, is blindly instinctive. There are only a few suggestions in this play of the more positive acceptance of death that we find later.

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## II.

The theme of liberty and restraint has, in *Measure for Measure,* another and more public aspect. The first full line of the play is, ' Of government the properties to unfold,' and the working out of the new severity of the law against licence leads to an examination of more general questions—the relations of law and ' justice,' of individual freedom and social control, of governors and governed. Here again one finds not only divided sympathies but the pressure of feelings that fail to reach explicit recognition, as in the Duke's lines about the folly of keeping laws on the statute book but not enforcing them:

> We have strict statutes and most biting laws,
> The needful bits and curbs to headstrong weeds,
> Which for this fourteen years we have let slip;
> Even like an o'er grown lion in a cave,
> That goes not out to prey. Now, as fond fathers,
> Having bound up the threat'ning twigs of birch,
> Only to stick it in their children's sight
> For terror not to use, in time the rod
> Becomes more mock'd than fear'd; so our decrees,
> Dead to infliction, to themselves are dead,
> And liberty plucks justice by the nose;
> The baby beats the nurse, and quite athwart
> Goes all decorum.

What one first notices here is the crisp and lively description of the disorder resulting from official negligence; but behind this there are more complex feelings. If the offenders are 'weeds,' they are also full of natural energy, like the horse that needs the curb;[4] whilst the concluding lines suggest mischief or childish tantrums rather than deliberate wickedness. And if the unenforced law is ludicrous—' a scarecrow,' as Angelo says (II, i, 1)—the law and the lawmakers

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[4]Mr. Empson, making this point, remarks, ' You may say that Shakespeare, though not the Duke, had both attitudes towards the wicked in mind, and would have preferred to call them " steeds." But this element in his judgment is sufficiently expressed by calling them *headstrong;* it is *Measure for Measure* to move from one attitude to the other ' (*Seven Types of Ambiguity,* pp. 107-108).

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are not exactly amiable. If the Duke's metaphors are given due weight ('biting,' 'prey,' 'rod,' etc.) one begins to sympathize with Lucio's feelings about 'the hideous law' (I, iv, 63), especially when, a few lines later, the Duke is explicit that to enforce the laws is, now, 'to strike and gall' the people. It is, however, a postulate of the play that laws are necessary; and although Shakespeare's deep—and characteristically Elizabethan—sense of social *order* is not expressed here with the same force as it is elsewhere, it is not, I feel, simply Angelo who thinks of the law as 'all-building.' It is when this epithet is restored to its context that the underlying dilemma of the play becomes apparent: the full phrase is,

> the manacles
> Of the all-building law (II, iv, 93-94).

Once more, Shakespeare presents various possible attitudes and points of view. The perplexity of the ordinary man confronted with the application of the laws to a particular fellow human is expressed by Escalus when, towards the end of Act II, scene i, he reverts to Angelo's explicit instruction that Claudio shall 'be executed by nine to-morrow morning':

> *Escalus*: It grieves me for the death of Claudio;
> But there's no remedy.
> *Justice*: Lord Angelo is severe.
> *Escalus*: It is but needful:
> Mercy is not itself, that oft looks so;
> Pardon is still the nurse of second woe.
> But yet, poor Claudio! There is no remedy.

Whilst laws are necessary, they must be enforced; yet one's readiness to accept the logic of this is qualified by various considerations already, in the same scene, brought to our attention. Elbow, chosen constable by his neighbours for seven years and a half, is not simply a stock figure of fun: those who are concerned for the validity of the law can hardly ignore the fact that its instruments may be as foolish as he. 'Which is the wiser here?' says Escalus, confronted with Elbow, Froth and Pompey, 'Justice or Iniquity?' Again, how many escape the law!

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Some run from brakes of vice and answer none,
And some condemned for a fault alone.

' Robes and furr'd gowns hide all,' as the mad king says in *Lear*. More important still, those who make or administer the laws may be as corrupt, at least in thought, as those they sentence. This is what Escalus urges on Angelo at the beginning of the scene, and the exchange between them leads to the heart of the problem.

*Escalus*: Let but your honour know,
Whom I believe to be most strait in virtue,
That, in the working of your own affections,
Had time coher'd with place or place with wishing,
Or that the resolute acting of your blood
Could have attain'd the effect of your own purpose,
Whether you had not, sometime in your life,
Err'd in this point which now you censure him,
And pull'd the law upon you.

*Angelo*: 'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus,
Another thing to fall. I not deny,
The jury, passing on the prisoner's life,
May in the sworn twelve have a thief or two
Guiltier than him they try; what's open made to justice,
That justice seizes: what know the laws
That thieves do pass on thieves?

Angelo, self-righteous and unsubtle, claims that the law is impersonal: equating law with justice, he complacently overlooks the fact that justice has a moral basis, and that morality is concerned with men's thoughts and desires, not merely with their acts. When, in the following scene (II, ii), Isabella takes up this theme—

How would you be,
If He, which is the top of judgment, should
But judge you as you are?

—she is met with the same answer: ' It is the law, not I, condemns your brother.' Given Angelo's premise, that law *is* justice, his further contention, that any deviation from strict law involves injustice to ' those . . . which a dismiss'd offence would after gall,' is unassailable. Isabella, when her plea for mercy fails,

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takes the only course open to her and attacks the human motive that sets the logical machine in motion,

> Hooking both right and wrong to the appetite,
> To follow as it draws. (II, iv, 176-177)

Claudio has already made some bitter comments on ' the demi-god Authority,' and Isabella, in words that remind us once more of *Lear,* now forces the personal, as opposed to the purely formal, issue:

> So you must be the first that gives this sentence,
> And he, that suffers . . .
> Could great men thunder
> As Jove himself does, Jove would ne'er be quiet,
> For every pelting, petty officer
> Would use his heaven for thunder; nothing but thunder!

That, really, is as far as we get. That Angelo has to reverse his former opinion and to tell himself,

> Thieves for their robbery have authority
> When judges steal themselves,

is not a full answer to the questions we have been forced to ask; and it is significant that the last two acts, showing obvious signs of haste, are little more than a drawing out and resolution of the plot. Angelo's temptation and fall finely enforces the need for self-knowledge and sympathy which seems to be the central ' moral ' of the play,[5] and which certainly has a very direct bearing on the problems of law and statecraft involved in any attempt to produce order in an imperfect society. But the problems remain. Important in any age, they had a particular urgency at a time when established social forms were being undermined by new forces, and Shakespeare—who in several plays had already pondered ' the providence that's in a watchful state '—was to return to them again with a developed insight that makes most political thought look oddly unsubstantial. The development was, of course, to be in the direction indicated by *Measure for Measure*—the continued reduction

[5]Mr. Wilson Knight's essay in *The Wheel of Fire* is headed, aptly, ' *Measure for Measure* and the Gospels.'

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of abstract ' questions ' to terms of particular human motives and particular human consequences, and the more and more explicit recognition of complexities and contradictions that appear as soon as one leaves the realm of the formal and the abstract. But in this play the paradox of human law—related on one side to justice and on the other to expediency—is felt as confusion rather than as a sharply focussed dilemma. The reader exclaims with Claudio,

> Whether the tyranny be in his place,
> Or in his eminence that fills it up,
> I stagger in.[6] (I, ii, 164-166)

I hope that no one, reaching the end of this examination, will feel that it would have been more appropriate if *Measure for Measure* had been written by Mr. Shaw. The play itself—and this is a sign of its limitations—tends to force discussion in the direction of argument; but I certainly do not wish to imply that its admitted unsatisfactoriness is due to Shakespeare's failure to provide neat answers for Social Problems. Even when, later, he probes far more deeply the preoccupations that have been touched on here, he offers no solutions. *Lear, Coriolanus, Antony and Cleopatra,*—each is a great work of clarification, in which there is the fullest recognition of conflicting ' truths '; in these plays, therefore, there is that element of paradox which seems inseparable from any work of supreme honesty. In *Measure for Measure* the process of clarification is incomplete, and one finds not paradox but genuine ambiguity.

L. C. KNIGHTS.

*L. C. Knights has invited F. R. Leavis to develop his expressed dissent from the above. See the following page.*

[6] ' His eminence,'—as one might say, ' his high and mightiness.'

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# THE GREATNESS OF 'MEASURE FOR MEASURE'

RE-READING, both of the above and of *Measure for Measure*, has only heightened my first surprise that such an argument about what seems to me one of the very greatest of the plays, and most consummate and convincing of Shakespeare's achievements, should have come from the author of *How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?* For I cannot see that the 'discomfort' he sets out to explain is other in kind than that which, in the bad prepotent tradition, has placed *Measure for Measure* both among the 'unpleasant' ('cynical') plays and among the unconscionable compromises of the artist with the botcher, the tragic poet with the slick provider of bespoke comedy. In fact, Knights explicitly appeals to the 'admitted unsatisfactoriness' of *Measure for Measure*. The 'admitted unsatisfactoriness,' I find myself with some embarrassment driven to point out (he quotes Hazlitt and Coleridge, and might have followed up with Swinburne, the *Arden* editor, Sir Edmund Chambers, Mr. Desmond McCarthy, the editors of the *New Cambridge Shakespeare*, and innumerable others), has to be explained in terms of that incapacity for dealing with poetic drama, that innocence about the nature of convention and the conventional possibilities of Shakespearean dramatic method and form, which we associate classically with the name of Bradley.

It is true that Knights doesn't make the usual attack on the character and proceedings of the Duke, and tell us how unadmirable he is, how indefensible, as man and ruler.[1] Nor, in reading

[1] 'The Duke hardly seems to be a personage to delight in. It is not merely his didactic platitudes and his somewhat over-done pompousness that get upon one's nerves, but his inner character. We first meet him too timid or too irresolute to enforce his own laws and deputing his duty to another, while he himself plunges into a vortex of scheming and intrigue; concluding by falling in love with a votary. At III. i. 67 does he not transgress against the confessional? Again, he must have known of Angelo's treatment of Mariana, at least we are left to suppose he did (III. i. 228), and was

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this critic, do we find cause for invoking the kind of inhibition that has certainly counted for a lot in establishing the ' accepted ' attitude towards *Measure for Measure*—inhibition about sex: he doesn't himself actually call the play 'unpleasant ' or ' cynical.' But that ' sense of uneasiness ' which ' we are trying to track down ' —what, when we have followed through his investigations, does it amount to? It focuses, he says, upon Claudio, or, rather, upon Claudio's offence:

> ' It is Claudio—who is scarcely a " character " at all, and who stands between the two extremes—who seems to spring from feelings at war with themselves, and it is in considering the nature of his offence that one feels most perplexity.'

I am moved to ask by the way what can be Knights's critical intention in judging Claudio to be ' scarcely a " character " at all.' I think it worth asking because (among other things) of his judgment elsewhere that Angelo is a ' sketch rather than a developed character study.' True, he says this parenthetically, while remarking that Angelo is the ' admitted success of the play '; but it is an odd parenthesis to have come from the author of *How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?* It seems to me to have no point, though an unintentional significance.

But to come back to Claudio, whom Knights judges to be ' not consistently *created* ': it is plain that the main critical intention would be rendered by shifting the italics to ' consistently '—he is not ' created ' (*i.e.*, ' scarcely a " character " ') and, what's more significant, not consistent. This inconsistency, this ' uncertainty of handling,' we are invited to find localized in the half-dozen lines of Claudio's first address to Lucio—here Knights makes his most serious offer at grounding his argument in the text:

> From too much liberty, my Lucio, liberty:
> As surfeit is the father of much fast,
> So every scope by the immoderate use

---

not his (the Duke's) a very shifty way of bringing him to justice, instead of a straight prosecution? Then the freedom with which he lies (IV. iii. 108-115) is not prepossessing. I imagine Shakespeare was not in love with his Duke. " A shy fellow was the Duke ".'

The *Arden* Introduction, p. xxii.

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> Turns to restraint. Our natures do pursue,
> Like rats that ravin down their proper bane,
> A thirsty evil, and when we drink we die.

What problem is presented by these lines? The only problem I can see is why anyone should make heavy weather of them. Knights finds it disconcerting that Claudio should express vehement self-condemnation and self-disgust. But Claudio has committed a serious offence, not only in the eyes of the law, but in his own eyes. No doubt he doesn't feel that the offence deserves death; nor does anyone in the play, except Angelo (it is characteristic of Isabella that she should be not quite certain about it). On the other hand, is it difficult to grant his acquiescence in the moral conventions that, barring Lucio and the professionals, everyone about him accepts? A Claudio who took an advanced twentieth-century line in these matters might have made a more interesting ' character '; but such an emancipated Claudio was no part of Shakespeare's conception of his theme. Nor, I think Knights will grant, are there any grounds for supposing that Shakespeare. himself tended to feel that the prescription of pre-marital chastity might well be dispensed with.

No perplexity, then, should be caused by Claudio's taking conventional morality seriously; that he should do so is not in any way at odds with his being in love, or with the mutuality of the offence. And that he should be bitterly self-reproachful and self-condemnatory, and impute a heavier guilt to himself than anyone else (except Isabella and Angelo) imputes to him, is surely natural · he is not a libertine, true (though a pal of Lucio's); but, as he now sees the case, he has recklessly courted temptation, has succumbed to the uncontrollable appetite so engendered, and as a result brought death upon himself, and upon Juliet disgrace and misery. Every element of the figurative comparison will be found to be accounted for here, I think, and I can't see anything ' odd ' or ' inappropriate ' about the bitterness and disgust.

Further, Knights's own point should be done justice to: ' The emphasis has, too, an obvious dramatic function, for, by suggesting that the offence was indeed grave, it makes the penalty seem less fantastic; and in the theatre that is probably all one notices in the swift transition to more explicit exposition.' The complementary point I want to make is that nowhere else in the play is there anything to support Knights's diagnostic commentary. The ' uncer-

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tainty of attitude' in Shakespeare's handling of Claudio, an uncertainty manifested in a 'dislocation or confusion of feeling,' depends on those six lines for its demonstration: it can't be plausibly illustrated from any other producible passage of the text. And I don't think anyone could have passed from those lines to the argument that adduces sonnet 129 and the passage from *Cymbeline*, and ends in references to *Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida*, who was not importing into *Measure for Measure* something that wasn't put there by Shakespeare. The importation seems to me essentially that which is provided by what I have called the bad prepotent tradition. Taking advantage of the distraction caused by the problems that propose themselves if one doesn't accept what *Measure for Measure* does offer, that tradition naturally tends to smuggle its irrelevances into the vacancies one has created. It must be plain that the references to *Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida* implicitly endorse the accepted classing of *Measure for Measure* with the 'unpleasant,' 'cynical' and 'pessimistic' plays.

The strength of the *parti pris* becomes very strikingly apparent when we are told, of the Provost's sympathetic remark,

> Alas!
> He hath but as offended in a dream,

that 'it seems to echo once more the sonnet on lust.' I am convinced it couldn't have seemed to do so to anyone who had not projected on to the text what he finds it giving back. When the word 'dream,' without any supporting context, can set up such repercussions, we have surely a clear case of possession by the idea or pre-determined bent. The intention of the Provost's remark is plain enough: he is merely saying that the offence (morals are morals, and we don't expect a Provost to say, or think, there has been *no* offence) can't be thought of as belonging to the world of real wrongdoing, where there is willed offending action that effects evil and is rightly held to accountability. The Provost, that is, voices a decent commonsense humanity.

Isabella takes a sterner moral line. But why this should give rise to perplexity or doubt about the attitude we ourselves are to take towards Claudio I can't see. Then I don't agree that she is not sufficiently 'placed.' Without necessarily judging that she is to be regarded with simple repulsion as an 'illustration of the frosty

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lack of sympathy of a self-regarding puritanism,' we surely know that her attitude is not Shakespeare's, and is not meant to be ours. With the Duke it is different. His attitude, nothing could be plainer, *is* meant to be ours—his total attitude, which is the total attitude of the play. He, then, is something more complex than Isabella; but need it conduce to a ' sense of strain and mental discomfort ' when speaking as a Friar, he shows himself ' disposed to severity towards " the sin " of Claudio and Juliet '; or when, speaking both as a Friar and to Lucio, he says, ' It is too general a vice, and severity must cure it '? To impersonate a reverend friar, with the aim, essential to the plot, of being taken for a reverend friar, and talk otherwise about the given ' natural relation '—we might reasonably have found uncertainty of handling in that. As it is, the disguised Duke acts the part, so that the general confidence he wins, including Isabella's, is quite credible.

The criticism that the Duke's speech, ' Reason thus with life . . . ,' ' ignores the reality of emotion ' was anticipated (as Knights, by mentioning in the same footnote Claudio's ' retort to the equally " reasonable " Isabella,' reminds us) by Shakespeare himself. The duly noted superiority of Claudio's speech on death to the Duke's (on which at the same time, I think Knights is too hard) is significant, and it is, not insignificantly, in the same scene. A further implicit criticism is conveyed through Barnadine, who is not, for all the appreciative commentary of the best authorities, a mere pleasing piece of self-indulgence on Shakespeare's part: of all the attitudes concretely lived in the play, the indifference to death displayed by him comes nearest to that preached by the Friar. Those illusions and unrealities which he dismisses, and which for most of us make living undeniably positive and real, have no hold on Barnadine; for him life is indeed an after-dinner's sleep, and he, in the wisdom of drink and insensibility, has no fear at all of death. And towards him we are left in no doubt about the attitude we are to take: ' Unfit to live or die,' says the Duke, voicing the general contempt.

In fact, the whole context, the whole play, is an implicit criticism of that speech; the speech of which the *Arden* editor, identifying the Friar-Duke quite simply and directly with Shakespeare, says representatively, on the page now beneath my eye: ' There is a terrible and morbid pessimism in this powerful speech

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on " unhealthy-mindedness " that can have only escaped from a spirit in sore trouble.' Actually, no play in the whole canon is remoter from ' morbid pessimism ' than *Measure for Measure*, or less properly to be associated in mood with *Hamlet* or *Troilus and Cressida*. For the attitude towards death (and life, of course) that the Friar recommends is rejected not merely by Claudio, but by its total context in the play, the varied positive aspects of which it brings out—its significance being that it does so. In particular this significance appears when we consider the speech in relation to the assortment of attitudes towards death that the play dramatizes. Barnadine is an unambiguous figure. Claudio shrinks from death because, once he sees a chance of escape, life, in spite of all the Friar may have said, asserts itself, with all the force of healthy natural impulse, as undeniably real and poignantly desirable; and also because of eschatological terrors, the significance of which is positive, since they are correlatives of established positive attitudes (the suggestion of Dante has often been noted). Isabella can exhibit a contempt of death because of the exaltation of her faith. Angelo begs for death when he stands condemned, not merely in the eyes of others, but in his own eyes, by the criteria upon which his self-approval has been based; when, it may fairly be said, his image of himself shattered, he has already lost his life.

The death-penalty of the Romantic comedy convention that Shakespeare starts from he puts to profoundly serious use. It is a necessary instrument in the experimental demonstration upon Angelo:

> hence shall we see,
> If power change purpose, what our seemers be.
> [I. iii. 53]

The demonstration is of human nature, for Angelo is

> man, proud man,
> Drest in a little brief authority,
> Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
> His glassy essence . . . [II. ii. 117]

Of the nature of the issue we are reminded explicitly again and again:

> If he had been as you, and you as he,
> You would have slipped like him . . . [II. ii. 64]

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> How would you be
> If He, which is the top of judgment, should
> But judge you as you are? O! think on that. [II. ii. 75]
>
> Go to your bosom;
> Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know
> That's like my brother's fault: if it confess
> A natural guiltiness such as is his,
> Let it not sound a thought upon your tongue
> Against my brother's life. [II. ii. 136]

The generalized form in which the result of the experiment may be stated is, ' Judge not, that ye be not judged '—how close in this play Shakespeare is to the New Testament Wilson Knight (whose essay in *The Wheel of Fire* gives the only adequate account of *Measure for Measure* I know) and R. W. Chambers (see *Man's Unconquerable Mind*) have recognized. But there is no need for us to create a perplexity for ourselves out of the further recognition that, even in the play of which this is the moral, Shakespeare conveys his belief that law, order, and formal justice are necessary. To talk in this connexion of the ' underlying dilemma ' of the play is to suggest (in keeping with the general purpose of Knights's paper) that Shakespeare shows himself the victim of unresolved contradictions, of mental conflict or of uncertainty. But, surely, to believe that some organs and procedures of social discipline are essential to the maintenance of society needn't be incompatible with recognizing profound and salutary wisdom in ' Judge not, that ye be not judged,' or with believing that it is our duty to keep ourselves alive to the human and personal actualities that underlie the ' impersonality ' of justice. Complexity of attitude isn't necessarily conflict or contradiction; and, it may be added (perhaps the reminder will be found not unpardonable), some degree of complexity of attitude is involved in all social living. It is Shakespeare's great triumph in *Measure for Measure* to have achieved so inclusive and delicate a complexity, and to have shown us complexity distinguished from contradiction, conflict and uncertainty with so sure and subtle a touch. The quality of the whole, in fact, answers to the promise of the poetic texture, to which Knights, in his preoccupation with a false trail, seems to me to have done so little justice.

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To believe in the need for law and order is not to approve of any and every law; and about Shakespeare's attitude to the particular law in question there can be no doubt. We accept the law as a necessary datum, but that is not to say that we are required to accept it in any abeyance of our critical faculties. On the contrary it is an obvious challenge to judgment, and its necessity is a matter of the total challenge it subserves to our deepest sense of responsibility and our most comprehensive and delicate powers of discrimination. We have come now, of course, to the treatment of sex in *Measure for Measure,* and I find myself obliged to insist once more that complexity of attitude needn't be ambiguity, or subtlety uncertainty.

The attitude towards Claudio we have dealt with. Isabella presents a subtler case, but not, I think, one that ought to leave us in any doubt. ' What,' asks Knights, ' are we to think of Isabella? Is she the embodiment of a chaste serenity, or is she, like Angelo, an illustration of the frosty lack of sympathy of a self-regarding puritanism? ' But why assume that it must be ' either or '—that she has to be merely the one or else merely the other? It is true that, as Knights remarks, *Measure for Measure* bears a relation to the Morality; but the Shakespearean use of convention permits far subtler attitudes and valuations than the Morality does. On the one hand, Isabella is clearly not a simple occasion for our feelings of critical superiority. The respect paid her on her entry by the lewd and irreverent Lucio is significant, and she convincingly establishes a presence qualified to command such respect. Her showing in the consummate interviews with Angelo must command a measure of sympathy in us. It is she who speaks the supreme enunciation of the key-theme:

> man, proud man,
> Drest in a little brief authority . . .

On the other hand R. W. Chambers is certainly wrong in contending that we are to regard her with pure uncritical sympathy as representing an attitude endorsed by Shakespeare himself.

To begin with, we note that the momentary state of grace to which her influence lifts Lucio itself issues in what amounts to a criticism—a limiting and placing criticism:

> *Lucio*: I hold you as a thing ensky'd and sainted:
> By your renouncement an immortal spirit,

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And to be talked with in sincerity,
As with a saint.

*Isab.*: You do blaspheme the good in mocking me.

*Lucio*: Do not believe it. Fewness and truth, 'tis thus:
Your brother and his lover have embrac'd:
As those that feed grow full, as blossoming time
That from the seedness the bare fallow brings
To teeming foison, even so her plenteous womb
Expresseth his full tilth and husbandry.

[I. iv. 34]

This is implicit criticism in the sense that the attitude it conveys, while endorsed dramatically by the exalted seriousness that is a tribute to Isabella, and poetically by the unmistakable power of the expression (it comes, we feel, from the centre), is something to which she, with her armoured virtue, can't attain. We note further that this advantage over her that Lucio has (for we feel it to be that, little as he has our sympathy in general) comes out again in its being he who has to incite Isabella to warmth and persistence in her intercession for Claudio. The effect of this is confirmed when, without demanding that Isabella should have yielded to Angelo's condition, we register her soliloquizing exit at the end of Act IV Scene II; it is not credibly an accidental touch:

Then, Isabel, live chaste, and, brother, die:
More than our brother is our chastity.

The cumulative effect is such that it would need a stronger argument than R. W. Chambers's to convince us that there oughn't to be an element of the critical in the way we take Isabella's parting discharge upon Claudio:

*Isab.*: Take my defiance:
Die, perish! Might but my bending down
Reprieve thee from thy fate, it should proceed.
I'll pray a thousand prayers for thy death,
No word to save thee.

*Claud.*: Nay, hear me, Isabel.

*Isab.*: O! fie, fie, fie.
Thy sin's not accidental, but a trade.
Mercy to thee would prove itself a bawd:

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'Tis best that thou diest quickly.

[Going.

*Claud.*: O hear me, Isabella!

It is all in keeping that she should betray, in the exalted assertion of her chastity, a kind of sensuality of martyrdom:

> were I under the terms of death,
> The impression of keen whips I'd wear as rubies,
> And strip myself to death, as to a bed
> That longing have been sick for, ere I'd yield
> My body up to shame.
>
> [II. iv. 100]

Finally, it is surely significant that the play should end upon a hint that she is to marry the Duke—a hint that, implying a high valuation along with a criticism, aptly clinches the general presentment of her.

But at this point I come sharply up against the casual and confident assumption that we must all agree in a judgment I find staggering: ' it is significant that the last two acts, showing obvious signs of haste, are little more than a drawing out and resolution of the plot.' The force of this judgment, as the last sentence of Knights's first paragraph confirms, is that the ' drawing out and resolution of the plot,' being mere arbitrary theatre-craft done from the outside, in order to fit the disconcerting development of the poet's essential interests with a comedy ending that couldn't have been elicited out of their inner logic, are not, for interpretive criticism, significant at all. My own view is clean contrary: it is that the resolution of the plot of *Measure for Measure* is a consummately right and satisfying fulfilment of the essential design; marvellously adroit, with an adoitness that expresses, and derives from, the poet's sure human insight and his fineness of ethical and poetic sensibility.

But what one makes of the ending of the play depends on what one makes of the Duke; and I am embarrassed about proceeding, since the Duke has been very adequately dealt with by Wilson Knight, whose essay Knights refers to. The Duke, it is important to note, was invented by Shakespeare; in *Promos and Cassandra*, Shakespeare's source, there no equivalent. He, his delegation of

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authority and his disguise (themselves familiar romantic conventions) are the means by which Shakespeare transforms a romantic comedy into a completely and profoundly serious ' criticism of life.' The more-than-Prospero of the play, it is the Duke who initiates and controls the experimental demonstration—the controlled experiment —that forms the action.

There are hints at the outset that he knows what the result will be; and it turns out that he had deputed his authority in full knowledge of Angelo's behaviour towards Mariana. Just what he is, in what subtle ways we are made to take him as more than a mere character, is illuminatingly discussed in *The Wheel of Fire*. Subtly and flexibly as he functions, the nature of the convention is, I can't help feeling, always sufficiently plain for the purposes of the moment. If he were felt as a mere character, an actor among the others, there would be some point in the kind of criticism that has been brought against him (not explicitly, I hasten to add, by Knights—though, in consistency, he seems to me committed to it). How uncondonably cruel, for example, to keep Isabella on the rack with the lie about her brother's death!

I am bound to say that the right way of taking this, and everything else that has pained and perplexed the specialists, seems to me to impose itself easily and naturally. The feeling about the Duke expressed later by Angelo—

> O my dread lord!
> I should be guiltier than my guiltiness,
> To think I can be undiscernible,
> When I perceive your grace, like power divine
> Hath look'd upon my passes,

the sense of him as a kind of Providence directing the action from above, has been strongly established. The nature of the action as a controlled experiment with the Duke in charge of the controls, has asserted itself sufficiently. We know where we have to focus our critical attention and our moral sensibility: not, that is, upon the Duke, but upon the representatives of human nature that provide the subjects of the demonstration. This, we know, is to be carried to the promised upshot—

> hence shall we see,
> If power change purpose, what our seemers be,

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which will be, not only the exposure of Angelo, but his exposure in circumstances that develop and unfold publicly the maximum significance.

The reliance on our responding appropriately is the more patently justified and the less questionable (I confess, it seems to me irresistible) in that we can see the promise being so consummately kept. The 'resolution of the plot,' ballet-like in its patterned formality and masterly in stage-craft, sets out with lucid pregnancy the full significance of the demonstration: 'man, proud man,' is stripped publicly of all protective ignorance of 'his glassy essence'; the ironies of 'measure for measure' are clinched; in a supreme test upon Isabella, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged' gets an ironical enforcement; and the relative values are conclusively established—the various attitudes settle into their final placing with regard to one another and to the positives that have been concretely defined.

I don't propose to do a detailed analysis of this winding-up—that seems to me unnecessary; if you see the general nature of what is being done, the main points are obvious. I will only refer, in illustration of the economy of this masterpiece in which every touch has significance, to one point that I don't remember to have seen noted. There is (as every one knows) another invention of Shakespeare's besides the Duke—Mariana, and her treatment by Angelo. It wasn't, as R. W. Chambers thinks, merely in order to save Isabella's chastity that Shakespeare brought in Mariana; as the winding-up scenes sufficiently insist, she plays an important part in the pattern of correspondences and responses by which, largely, the moral valuations are established. In these scenes, Angelo's treatment of her takes its place of critical correspondence in relation to Claudio's offence with Juliet; and Claudio's offence, which is capital, appears as hardly an offence at all, by any serious morality, in comparison with Angelo's piece of respectable prudence.

Finally, by way of illustrating how the moral aspect of the play is affected by an understanding of the form and convention, I must glance at that matter of Angelo's escape from death—and worse than escape ('. . . the pardon and marriage of Angelo not merely baffles the strong indignant claim of justice,' etc.)—which has stuck in the throats of so many critics since Coleridge. One has, then, to point out as inoffensively as possible that the point of the play depends upon Angelo's not being a certified criminal-type, capable

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of a wickedness that marks him off from you and me:

> Go to your bosom;
> Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know
> That's like my brother's fault: if it confess
> A natural guiltiness such as is his,
> Let it not sound a thought upon your tongue
> Against my brother's life.
>
> If he had been as you, and you as he,
> You would have slipp'd like him . . .

There is a wider application than that the speaker intends—even critics aren't exempt. If we don't see ourselves in Angelo, we have taken the play and the moral very imperfectly. Authority, in spite of his protest, was forced upon him, and there are grounds for regarding him as the major victim of the experiment. He was placed in a position calculated to actualize his worst potentialities; and Shakespeare's moral certainly isn't that those potentialities are exceptional. If any further argument should seem necessary for holding it possible, without offending our finer susceptibilities, to let Angelo marry a good woman and be happy, it may be said in complete seriousness that he has, since his guilty self-commitals, passed through virtual death; perhaps that may be allowed to make a difference. It is not merely that immediate death has appeared certain, but that his image of himself, his personality as he has lived it for himself as well as for the world, having been destroyed, he has embraced death:

> I am sorry that such sorrow I procure:
> And so deep sticks it in my penitent heart
> That I crave death more willingly than mercy:
> 'Tis my deserving, and I do entreat it.

So wide of the mark, then, is the judgment that, in this play, we have a tragic development mechanically and incongruously resolved in a comedy ending. It may be said further that, if *Measure for Measure* is to be bracketed with any other play in particular, it should be, not *Troilus and Cressida*, but *Macbeth*. And, in fact, the point about Angelo may be made by saying that he is in some important ways better qualified for the part of tragic hero than Macbeth is—just as there are reasons why, of the two

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plays, *Measure for Measure* should come more intimately home to the modern. There is something remote, romantic and 'costume' about the situation and crimes of the barbaric chieftain; and to show that Macbeth doesn't lack the necessary element of the sympathetic the critics have to exercise some ingenuity. It is surely easier for us to put ourselves in Angelo's place, and imagine ourselves exposed to his temptations. He is a victim (or is made one by the Duke'. experiment) of the discrepancy between an ideal and the actual. Mariana's representation of him—

> They say best men are moulded out of faults,
> And, for the most, become much more the better
> For being a llittle bad. [V. i. 442]

—is not to be taken as mere evidence of amiable feminine weakness. Isabella immediately afterwards—and it is not for nothing—reluctantly grants:

> I partly think
> A due sincerity govern'd his deeds,
> Till he did look on me.

The bright idea of last year's Cambridge production, the idea of injecting point, interest and modernity into him by making him a twitching study in neurosis, was worse than unnecessary. But then if you can't accept what Shakespeare does provide you have, in some way, to import your interest and significance.

F. R. LEAVIS.

# A NOTE ON IRISH LITERATURE AND THE IRISH TRADITION

THAT artists experience the need to work within a tradition is a commonplace. This does not imply that they will necessarily carry on the work of their immediate predecessors —we have seen Mr. Eliot, for example, passing over the Victorian and Romantic eras to assert his grip on an earlier poetry. But the question that arises from a consideration of the Irish literary scene

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of the last half-century is: Can the artist link up with a tradition which not only has lapsed many centuries before but that belonged to a different language?

For that is what the most intelligent writers of the Irish Literary Revival were attempting to do. Indeed, it was what they had to do. On the one hand, it was useless to talk of a further Gaelic literature of more than academic interest, for the language had now definitely collapsed—but on the other hand the English language did not seem to present a profitable field to the writer. Except, of course, to such literary business men as Charles Lever and Somerville and Ross, purveyors to (mainly) an English public of ' Irish ' foxhunting-and-fairy stories. What poetry there was being written in the English language was either intolerably dreary exercises *à l'anglaise* (usually in the style of Scott, or Byron, or, nearer home, Moore), or else the atrocious propaganda verse of the Young Ireland Party, a rather inappropriate orgy of anti-British cursing in thoroughly British verse conventions.

In brief, there was no possibility of a significant Gaelic literature in the future and no intimation of the possibility of a signifiicant Anglo-Irish one. There was not even the faintest conception of the likely nature of the latter. The problem was admittedly a difficult one, and it is easy to appreciate why any writer of talent chose to emigrate to London as soon as he could. To phrase the problem in its essentials, it was how to write Irish literature in the ' English ' language. That literature would be Irish in the sense that it would deal with Irish life, and in the sense that it would have much in common with the old literature—since the average Irishman, the peasant that is, had not radically altered his customs and manner of life by gradually dropping his own language and drifting into an ever increasing use of a foreign one. Modified this way of life would be, but so was the English language modified in his use of it. The proud nationalist writer might scorn to employ what he considered a bastard tongue, but in so doing he condemned himself to an art of only esoteric interest, to deliberate archaism. Nor was it true to reject the common dialect (or, rather, dialects) as bastard, for by this time the people had adapted the usurping language to their needs and nature. But still the majority of writers found it easier to base their work on a feeble and unimpressive compromise between the natural ethos of life of their country and a foreign ethos

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of art. And that was the end of them, since work based on that compromise sooner or later degenerated by a process of logic into a pervasive ignoble Spirit of Fun, the Stage Irishry, the renegade 'laughing with foreign jaws.' I suppose Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* is about the most respectable example of what I mean.

The solution—the only possible one, whether it was to prove successful or not—was first indicated in 1878 with the publication of Standish O'Grady's *History of Ireland,* which the author (the 'Father of the Revival') described as 'the reconstruction by imaginative processes of the life led by our ancestors in this country.' Of the legends he was dealing with he wrote: 'They are that kind of history a nation desires to possess. They betray the ambitions and ideals of the people, and, in that respect, have a value beyond the tale of actual events and duly recorded deeds.' It is difficult for an outsider to realize how completely the Gaelic tradition of letters and the blend of ancient history and ancient legend that O'Grady was writing about had fallen into obscurity—except that the latter still existed among the peasantry, who were not likely to make any specifically artistic use of it. And it is only when one realizes that fact, and how literature had become foreign, a mere minor branch of English literature, that the Literary Revival will receive its just estimate.

Thus the situation in Irish letters in the early years of the present century when the Revival proper had got into its swing was this: By the pioneer work of O'Grady and the translations of Douglas Hyde and others the fundaments of Gaelic mythology and of its use in Gaelic literature (and that the tradition of Gaelic literature is an impressive one nobody will deny) had been revealed to those whom a political renascence (in the first place) had prepared for it.

The events of the next decade (and most important the formation of the Irish Theatre, and the arrival of Synge) are too well known for recapitulation to be necessary. It remains to consider cursorily some of the chief figures and the ways in which they sought to utilize the recent revelations of a past glory.

Without Yeats the Irish drama would probably never have existed. But his own creative contributions to it are comparatively unimportant. He said of his plays: 'I hope to get our heroic age into verse . . . My own preoccupation is more with the heroic

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legend than with the folk.' It was thus his declared intention to use the folklore of the heroic age, the stories of Cuchulain, Conchubar, Deirdre, etc., but it is only fair to that mythology to note that he misused it, too. He wrote: 'our plays will be for the most part remote, spiritual, and ideal.' Which was a bad ambition as well as a bad prophecy. For the Gaelic mythological cycles upon which he drew were of a far less simple and naïve nature than one would gather from his plays. They are characterised by animated and humorous anecdotes about the heroes in their less heroic moments, by satirical footnotes on the gods—the 'spirituality,' 'remoteness,' of these figures is somewhat more equivocal than Yeats represented, for their world, with its subtle gradations of supernaturalness and the interplay between one species and another, is far removed from the Wagnerian heavy artillery. More interesting than Yeats's plays are Lady Gregory's two books, *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* and *Gods and Fighting Men,* both written in her 'Kiltartan dialect,' the literary use of which she had learned from Douglas Hyde.[1] Her stories strike one as genuine folklore (she took them down from peasants), while the way in which Yeats uses his material savours of Mythology as a learned study. He abstracts the high noble elements from the body of Gaelic mythology, leaving behind the more vulgar elements, the salutary dross. For when he engages in humour, it is a very sophisticated, vaguely 'symbolical' humour: his fools are always more than fools—like the Fool in *Lear* they tend towards some higher intellectual significance—but this we sense rather than realize. It is a disembodied and tenuous form of humour, which usually consorts ill with the genuine borrowings from legend.

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[1]Synge wrote to Lady Gregory: 'Your *Cuchulain* is a part of my daily bread.' But Synge's debt is originally to Douglas Hyde (*Love Songs of Connacht,* etc.).

Lady Gregory played an important part on the business side of the Irish Theatre. She herself wrote mainly farces which were intended as no more than curtain raisers to the serious Abbey plays. Her best are the *Folk History Plays* (not farces)—*Grania,* for instance—in which we find the mechanism of Synge's peasant speech with none of his genius. The two prose books mentioned are her most pleasing.

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The state of affairs is similar if we turn to what is called the ' Celtic Twilight ' school of poetry. One thing to remember about ' Celtic Twilight ' is that it isn't really Celtic. 'Celtic feeling,'[2] in the loose popular sense, is largely a falsified conception of a real thing, falsified in all good faith by outsiders who desired to provide themselves with a convenient romantic escape with (apparently) the advantages of a dignified and long standing tradition. The ' Celtic Twilight ' school was based on an aesthetic that was sophisticated and exotic, nothing more than a branch of pre-Raphaelitism. Thomas MacDonagh (a writer shot after the 1916 Rising) wrote of Gaelic poetry: ' Nothing could be more clear, more direct, more gem-like, hard and delicate and bright, than the earlier lyric poetry,' and that is the common opinion of those qualified to opine—that Gaelic poetry, while often occupied with the natural scene, always has its eye on what it is describing, and generally operates by an economy of hard, precise adjectives: the mistiness is for the greater part a modern innovation which finds its apotheosis in the poetry of the young Yeats, of A.E. and of a number of minor poets. In fact it is true to say that as Yeats worked away from his early romanticism, so he worked nearer the old Gaelic realism and curtness: his nationalism as a poet increased as his deliberate intention to write in an Irish manner declined. ' I might have found more of Ireland if I had written in Irish, but I have found a little, and I have found all myself.' And that is always the *sine qua non*.

Yeats's later drama suggests an apparent change, a development, parallel to that in his poetry: but it is a development existing only on the surface—it gives the impression that it was a deliberate ' development ' which his conscience was forcing him to. It is clear now that he wrote great poetry only when his mythological interests were, like the iceberg, more submerged then emergent, and by the very nature of the plays he was writing the mythological element had to be uppermost—with everything else sacrificed to it, instead of it being employed as a factor in ' events ' of a less limited and more vital kind.

Yeats's use of speech idioms and rhythms in his poetry, that terseness and acid quality, is distinguished: but in his late plays it serves only to show up the unimportance of what he was about,

[2] ' A passionate, turbulent, and indomitable reaction against the despotism of fact.' (Matthew Arnold).

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the meagreness of the intellectual foundations, of the philosophical or moral implications, of the play in hand. *Purgatory*, his last play, is ' bare ' in an utterly bad sense—' Shelley's Italian light ' has faded, but only a dull cold filament is left. The make-up of the verse is in the quite undistinguished manner of the common or garden ' speech idioms and conversational rhythms ' practitioner.

But it is generally admitted that Synge[3] was the great discovery of the Irish Theatre. Little discussion of his work is necessary—his vices are as obvious as his virtues. His knowledge of the peasant was more intimate and more valuable than that of any other dramatist of the school, and he was quite alone in imparting to their behaviour and dialect an artistic worth of more than local validity; there are studies of Synge in both French and German.

*The Playboy of the Western World* is a fine vivacious play and it quite realized the ideals of the movement within which it was written. Nevertheless, though more, it is not very much more than a comedy of *l'homme moyen sensuel*. Though Synge studied the Elizabethans (and Anglo-Irish as a dialect is far nearer Elizabethan idiom than modern English), though he attained to a raciness and animation of expression which reminds one of Jonson, he did not attain to that basic moral intention to which end Jonson's verbal vitality was just the means. Indeed, it is hardly a question of ' attaining,' for Synge was not concerned with analysis of behaviour. Eager critics have talked of the psychological rebirth of the Playboy—his liberation from inarticulate and down-trodden adolescence—which is true enough, but not a convincing index to profundity.

*Mutatis mutandis*, Synge might be described as an Irish Keats: where Keats's verbal excesses tend towards overdone emotionality, Synge's tend towards overdone rhetoric—the reader's, or listener's, mind is choked by the unending flow of ' words would raise the topknot on a poet in a merchant's town.'[4]

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[3]Synge's *Plays, Poems and Prose Passages* are now in *Everyman*, 2/6d.

[4]Looking for an example of this, it struck me how Synge is continuously poised on the brink of a devastating ludicrousness, yet hardly ever loses his foothold. But this very feeling of precariousness imposes a certain strain on the reader. Even though it is difficult to point to a definite lapse, we know what Corkery means

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An exception must be made of *Riders to the Sea*. In this perfect little play the animalistic antics are restrained, are purified away, to give place to a severe tragic purpose. Drama since our Golden Age has little to place beside the scene, as Maurya is recounting how, many years before, she learnt of the drowning of one of her sons, peasant women enter, enacting her words, to lament the similar death of Bartley, as yet unknown to her. And the rest of the play sustains this tragic intensity. There can be little doubt that *Riders to the Sea* is the great event of Irish Drama.

In his book on Synge, Daniel Corkery[5] points out his remarkable deficiency: the complete omission of the spiritual life of his peasants; once again this criticism must be modified in the case of *Riders to the Sea*.

However irritated one may be by the unpredictable and jumbled religious feeling of the Irish working classes, the fact remains that there it is—a profound and irresistible force never with impunity to be left out of account (as politicians have found, and will no doubt in the future find, to their cost). But Synge did leave it out of account, and in so doing he missed a potential source of acute subtlety and of acute tragedy. He was more concerned with the pagan spirituality of the peasant: but it is the merging of Christianity into paganism, the blending and the clashing, that is the more interesting, as well as the more authentic. It is the arguments of Oisin and St. Patrick, the old heathen warrior and the

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when he describes the poor *Tinker's Wedding* as a ' gaudy raree show.'

But now turn to the fine translation of Maurice O'Sullivan's *Twenty Years A-Growing* (in ' Penguin,' incidentally. Here is a book with Synge's strength and without his weaknesses. It is really an outstanding example of the genuine Celtic ' romanticism ' at its best—that keen feeling for natural beauty which never degenerates into triteness or sentimentality and that streak of sardonicism which is a sure guarantee against the long heavy hair, pale brows and other meteorological mysteries which comprise a Celtic Twilight.

[5]Corkery seems the most free from uncritical idolatry of the ' inside ' Revival critics. By the very strictness of his nationalism he does manage to indicate those elements in the work of the Revival which deter it from international significance.

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leader of the new religion, that have always been the favourite tales of the peasants. Perhaps it was that Synge being a Protestant and a ' foreigner,' the islanders with whom he lived chose to regale him with fairy lore rather than with their more genuine ' religiousness.' But, as I remarked, the religious consciousness of the Irish peasant is inclined to be erratic in its manifestation, and though Synge rather confined himself to its ' off-moments,' his work within these limits is very fine. The *Playboy* makes the multitudinous peasant plays that followed it look as anaemic as the Ibsenite social drama against which Yeats had led the group.

For the peasant plays in general there is very little that can be said. One should remember—to give the devil his due—that the preoccupation with ' the land ' of Irish writers is not the sentimental affectation it would be with English writers: about 60 per cent. of the population of Eire consists of land workers as compared with (I believe) about 6 per cent. in England. Agriculture is still the dominant force in Irish social life.

But Synge and Padraic Colum (the first of the orthodox peasant playwrights) exhausted the whole genre between them, it seems. The host of conventional playwrights who followed in their footsteps—or, more properly, in Colum's—had nothing further to add; they are to be compared with the glut of 18th century poetasters. The Revival, too, had become ' cursed with a pastoral convention.'[6]

From peasant plays to Sean O'Casey is a large step, but the nature of this discussion will perhaps excuse it. It seems to me a misnomer to attribute Sean O'Casey to the Irish Drama: his work really belongs to the ' European New Writing ' movement. Which is perhaps all that need be said. In what sense is his work ' Irish '? It's about the Irish, admittedly, but as to interpretation of national character, it seems to me nothing more than a regression to the Somerville and Ross hooliganism, except that it is the violent and the sordid that is in fashion now, instead of the comic and the buffoon. The facility with which O'Casey has switched over from Dublin brogue to Cockney slang, from ' realism ' to the wishy-washy ' expressionism ' of *Within the Gates,* is itself suspicious.

[6]Corkery (in *The Peasant in Literature*) defined the bulk of popular Irish peasant literature as ' real in the non-essentials and very untrue in the essentials.'

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Can one imagine Synge, a genuine and painstaking artist, deserting Aran for Manchester and writing his next play in Lancashire accents? Where Synge is drawing on a living tradition and on his own genius, O'Casey's bank balance is only brogue and bloodshed. In the Theatre of the Left he has found his true home.

Yeats has said that a time comes to every Irish writer when he has to make up his mind either to express Ireland or to exploit it. The peasant dramatists exploited Ireland, and writers who, like O'Casey, chose the juicy Anglo-Irish wars for subject exploited Ireland too, just as surely as the New Writing movement made capital out of the Chinese, Spanish, etc., wars.

But the Revival was bound to end in this way—times change—but they can hardly be said to have changed too soon in this case. The important work of the Revival was done in its earlier years.

And so one is forced to the conclusion that the Irish Literary Revival failed—failed at any rate as a movement of international significance. But success of this kind was perhaps inevitably out of reach. A contemporary Irish literature which shall be as far from provincial as was Gaelic literature is probably as purely hypothetical as is *complete* Irish political ' naturalism ' or fulfilment, and perhaps for the same reason—Eire's geographical position in relation to England, and the past, present and future implications of that fact. The Gaelic tradition has lapsed completely, and the most scholars can do is to provide adequate translations for those who are interested; if they are as competent and as creatively talented as Douglas Hyde they may be able to revivify their translations. But that tradition is—as a mover and shaker of future literary worlds—quite dead.

But the Irish Revival was a memorable failure, and we cannot but feel grateful to that spontaneous and intelligent movement which helped to form Yeats and, more equivocally, Joyce. For Yeats's struggle to maintain the Irish Theatre and what he learnt from those energetic years correspond to the transformation of his artistic criteria and to the change from what we mean by ' early Yeats ' to what we mean by ' later Yeats ': ' To me drama . . . has been the search for more of manful energy, more of cheerful acceptance of whatever arises out of the logic of events, and for clean outline, instead of those outlines of lyric poetry that are blurred with desire and vague regret.'

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# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE 'PRINCESSE DE CLÈVES'

## I.

'MONSIEUR de La Rochefoucauld,' wrote Mademoiselle de Scudéry, pausing, perhaps, to wag a reproachful pen at the incorrigible Bussy Rabutin, 'Monsieur de La Rochefoucauld vit fort honnêtement avec Madame de La Fayette. Il n'y paraît que de l'amitié. Enfin, la crainte de Dieu de part et d'autre et peut-être la politique ont coupé les ailes à l'amour.'

The spectacle of the disillusioned moralist, very gouty and rather blind, setting up house with the great lady of impeccable virtue who was twenty years his junior is a curious one, but it had a far reaching influence on the development of the modern novel. Whether La Rochefoucauld and Madame de La Fayette slept in the same bed matters less to us to-day than the fact that they lived under the same roof at the time when *la Princesse de Clèves*—the finest novel of the seventeenth century—was written.

They seem at first a strangely assorted couple, but though their fortunes had been different in many ways they had one thing in common. In 1655 the twenty-one year old Marie-Madeleine Pioche de la Vergne had married the Comte de La Fayette—*un homme discret et effacé*, as one writer unkindly calls him—and had retired to the country. The marriage was not a success and after the birth of two children Madame de La Fayette decided, for reasons which are not mentioned by her biographers, to leave her husband. The wife returned to Paris to become one of the leading figures of its social life; the husband remained, a dim, forgotten figure, on his estates in Auvergne until his death in 1683. La Rochefoucauld's life had been a stormy one. He had taken part in some of the most violent happenings of his time, but he too had been unfortunate in love. In 1665—the year in which the *Maximes* were published—he and his wife parted company and he seems to have taken the blow hardly. He sought and found consolation with Madame de La Fayette, but it was not until the death of his wife five years later that *la politique* permitted them to make the union public.

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These events did not attract much attention in the seventeenth century and they may not appear of much importance to us, but they were very important to the people concerned. There is no doubt that Madame de La Fayette and La Rochefoucauld were drawn together by their common loneliness and misfortune. Her art shows how deeply they felt their misfortune. Her three principal works are all accounts of people who find out too late that they have married the wrong person and who try, not always successfully, to 'clip love's wings.' The note of sexual frustration that runs through all three books bears the stamp of personal experience.

'C'était un misanthrope poli, insinuant, souriant, qui précédait de bien peu et préparait avec charme l'autre *Misanthrope*,' wrote Sainte-Beuve of La Rochefoucauld[1]. It is probable that La Rochefoucauld would have accepted this account of himself. 'Pour parler de mon humeur,' he said, in one of those portraits that it pleased seventeenth-century artists to paint of themselves, 'je suis mélancolique.' The word *mélancolique* goes a long way towards explaining the weaknesses of his writings. It is one of the illusions of the Latin mind that truth can be reduced to a set of simple propositions and that our unruly desires and emotions can be enclosed in a few neat formulas. The aim of the *Maximes* is to prove that selfish impulses are the motives of nearly all human actions and to reveal the element of self-interest that lurks behind the most altruistic sentiments. La Rochefoucauld was not the great writer that he is sometimes said to be; he was an able writer who had behind him the weight of a great tradition. It is not surprising that he should have possessed something of the psychological insight which distinguished contemporary French masters or that this insight should have enabled him to shed a brilliant but distorting light upon the workings of the human mind. We may suspect, however, that his art was not the product of rational analysis as he liked to pretend. It was at bottom emotional and *mélancolique* explains its limitations. His vision was partial and incomplete; he had grasped one facet of the truth with great clarity and tried to erect it into a system. He needed a standard to sift and test his findings and a framework that would set his small discoveries in their true

[1] *Portraits de femmes*, p. 300.

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perspective. It is ironical to think that his best work was done at second-hand, that the philosopher collaborated in writing a work of fiction. For Madame de La Fayette possessed precisely those qualities that La Rochefoucauld lacked. She had the power of looking at life as a whole; she looked at it steadily and clearly and though she saw the impulses described by La Rochefoucauld, she saw others that were beyond the horizon of his circumscribed world. 'Monsieur de La Rochefoucauld m'a donné de l'esprit,' she once said, 'mais j'ai réformé son coeur.' It was no idle boast.

## II.

'Pendant que la guerre civile déchirait la France sous le règne de Charles IX,' runs the opening sentence of *la Princesse de Montpensier*, 'l'amour ne laissait pas de trouver sa place parmi tant de désordres, et d'en causer beaucoup dans son empire.'

This is a good description of the theme of Madame de La Fayette's work. In all her stories she is concerned with the disruptive influence of sexual passion on society. *La Princesse de Montpensier* was written between 1660 and 1662 before she came directly under the influence of La Rochefoucauld and it lacks the maturity and insight of *la Princesse de Clèves* and *la Comtesse de Tende*[2]. The difference is at once apparent when we compare the frigid

> 'Elle consentit donc à recevoir ses voeux, et lui permit de croire qu'elle n'était pas insensible à sa passion.'

with this passage from her last work:

> '"Je ne pense qu'à vous Madame: je ne suis occupé que de vous; et dans les premiers moments de la possession légitime du plus grand parti de France, à peine le jour commence à paraître, que je quitte la chambre où j'ai passé la nuit, pour vous dire que je me suis déjà repenti mille fois de vous avoir obéi, et de n'avoir pas tout donné pour ne vivre que pour vous."'

'Ce style et ces sentiments sont si éloignés des nôtres,' wrote Taine in his essay on the *Princesse de Clèves*, 'que nous avons peine

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[2]This was written in the years following La Rochefoucauld's death, but the actual date of composition appears to be unknown.

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à les comprendre. Ils sont des parfums trop fins: nous ne les sentons plus; tant de délicatesse nous semble de la froideur ou de la fadeur[3].'

The passage in the *Comtesse de Tende* comes from a letter written to the heroine by her lover the day after the marriage that she had persuaded him to go through with the Princesse de Neufchâtel in the vain hope of putting an end to a relationship which was anything but *légitime*. Taine's comment reminds us that we are much closer to the seventeenth-century writers than to some of the contemporary writers whom he admired. For the modern reader will scarcely find these sentiments *froids* or *fades*. It is not psychological insight alone that makes the passage remarkable. It is the fearlessness with which the speaker scrutinises his feelings and his very clear sense of the outrage committed against the accepted standards suggested by *les premiers moments de la possession légitime*, as well as the sense of a clear cut social hierarchy in which the outraged bride is *le plus grand parti de France*.

Nor will the modern reader find another passage in the same book *délicat* in the faintly derogatory sense in which Taine uses the word:

> 'Il se joignit un nouveau tourment à ceux qu'elle avait déjà: le Comte de Tende devint aussi amoureux d'elle, que si elle n'eût point été sa femme; il ne la quittait plus, et voulait reprendre tous ses droits méprisés.
>
> La comtesse s'y opposa avec une force et une aigreur qui allaient jusqu'au mépris; prévenue pour le Prince de Navarre, elle était blessée et offensée de toute autre passion que de la sienne. Le Comte de Tende sentit son procédé dans toute sa dureté; et, piqué jusqu'au vif, il l'assura qu'il ne l'importunerait de la vie; et, en effet, il la laissa avec beaucoup de sécheresse.'

The social critic peeps out in the first sentence, but the point is only incidental here and the psychologist is more impressive than the social critic. It is the psychologist who anticipates the modern novelist in her analysis of that violent sexual passion which sometimes reawakens in a husband on the threshold of middle age—that loveless, destructive passion described by Lawrence in *The Rainbow*.

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[3] *Essais de critique et d'histoire*, 2nd ed., 1866, p. 347.

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The reference to *droits* is characteristic of the seventeenth century and it is the knowledge that her unprepossessing husband's desires are *légitimes* which makes the Countess's feelings so complex and so bitter. Taine's essay helps to draw attention to the classic 'modesty' with which the very intimate details of this violent story are 'put across.'

Madame de La Fayette's two brief *nouvelles* possess considerable merits of their own, but the limitations imposed by the *nouvelle* help us to appreciate how necessary a novel was to give full scope to the writer's talent and to enable her to show the effects of *amour* not merely on a tiny group, but on the community as a whole.

## III.

*La Princesse de Clèves* was published anonymously in 1678 and was an immediate success. The story is a simple one. Mademoiselle de Chartres comes with her widowed mother to the Court. She makes a highly suitable match with the worthy Prince de Clèves whom she respects but does not love. Almost at once she meets the Duc de Nemours, one of the handsomest and most distinguished men of his time, and gradually falls in love with him. Her husband believes, mistakenly, that she has been unfaithful to him and dies of grief. Monsieur de Nemours waits for the Princess to recover from her grief and then renews his suit; but the Princess is overcome with remorse and refuses the man whom she holds responsible for her husband's death. She retires to a convent, which is renowned for its austerity, 'et sa vie, qui fut assez courte, laissa des exemples de vertu inimitables.'

The story, which is told with extraordinary charm and insight, could not fail to appeal to highly civilised people who were acutely aware of their deepest feelings. There were other reasons besides for its success. In this book the novelist gave her readers a full length study of the life of the Court which was only lightly veiled by ascribing the events to the reign of Henri II.

The advance in her art is evident from the opening paragraphs:

> 'La magnificence et la galanterie n'ont jamais paru en France avec tant d'éclat que dans les dernières années du règne de Henri second. Ce prince était galant, bien fait, et amoureux: quoique sa passion pour Diane de Poitiers, duchesse de

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Valentinois, eût commencé il y avait plus de vingt ans, elle n'en donnait pas des témoignages moins éclatants . . .

'Jamais Cour n'a eu tant de belles personnes et d'hommes admirablement bien faits; et il semblait que la nature eût pris plaisir à placer ce qu'elle donne de plus beau dans les plus grandes princesses et dans les plus grands princes.'

The writer succeeds with classic economy in presenting a picture of the public life of the ruling class in the seventeenth century. There is immense conviction behind the words describing the particular virtues admired by the age—*magnificence, galanterie, bien faits*. This conviction gives the passage a solidity and a balance which makes us feel the shape of society. It is reinforced by the *éclat* and *éclatant* with their suggestions of hard brilliance.

What is, perhaps, most admirable is that while the novelist is keenly aware of the value of 'magnificence' and 'galantry' and 'good looks,' her critical sense enables her to see that the absence of other virtues makes the society a precarious one. There is a suggestion of brittleness as well as of splendour in the *éclat—éclatant*.

A few pages later she writes:

'L'ambition et la galanterie étaient l'âme de cette Cour, et occupaient les hommes et les femmes. Il y avait tant d'intérêts et tant de cabales différentes, et les dames y avaient tant de part, que l'amour était toujours mêlé aux affaires, et les affaires à l'amour. Personne n'était tranquille ni indifférent: on songeait à s'élever, à plaire, à servir ou à nuire; on ne connaisait ni l'ennui ni l'oisiveté, et on était toujours occupé des plaisirs ou des intrigues.'

The movement of the second passage differs sensibly from that of the first. The opening strikes the same note, but the tempo of the passage quickens until the slow urbane movement seems to merge into the sharp staccato

'Personne n'était tranquille ni indifférent: on songeait à s'élever, à plaire, à servir ou à nuire . . .'

which reflects a feverish underground activity going on beneath the tranquil polished surface of society. It is not, as it seems at first, a simple change from one movement to another; it is one movement

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going on inside another. One has a vivid sensation of life moving simultaneously at two different tempos, of a subversive activity taking place within the framework of society.

There is a change, too, in the terms used. In the seventeenth century the French language was already a very precise instrument for the analysis of states of mind and was capable of conveying subtle shades of meaning. *Galanterie* stands for something that is public and open, for the degree of moral licence which is tolerated and perhaps applauded. It is associated with martial valour, but has no connection with *affaires*. *Amour* has the same sinister meaning as in Racine; it is inseparably bound up with *affaires;* it permeates the whole of society with its corrosive influence ' creating disorders of its own.'

On the next page the novelist becomes more explicit:

> ' Toutes ces différentes cabales avaient de l'émulation et de l'envie les unes contre les autres. Les dames qui les composaient avaient aussi de la jalousie entre elles, ou pour la faveur, ou pour les amants; les intérêts de grandeur et d'élévation se trouvaient souvent joints à ces autres intérêts moins importants, mais qui n'étaient pas moins sensibles. Ainsi il y avait une sorte d'agitation sans désordre dans cette Cour, qui la rendait très agréable, mais aussi très dangereuse pour une jeune personne.'

*Cabales* is one of the focal words not only of this passage, but of the whole book. We sometimes become a little impatient with Madame de La Fayette's digressions, but these accounts of amorous intrigue which are related with such a wealth of detail are an essential part of the book. They help to underline the main theme and they also give the book its restless movement, its sense of ceaseless friction not simply between groups of people or interests, but between groups of feelings which gradually wear themselves away. *Sensible* is another word that is familiar in Racine and it stands for that extreme sensitiveness which makes members of a highly civilized community so vulnerable for one another.

One of the central themes of the book is well described by the words *une sorte d'agitation sans désordre*. It is impossible not to be struck by the way in which words like *agitation, inquiétude, tranquillité* and *repos* seem, mockingly, to echo and answer one another all through the novel:

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' " Vous n'avez pour moi qu'une sorte de bonté qui ne me peut satisfaire [says the Prince de Clèves to his fiancée]; vous n'avez ni impatience, ni *inquiétude,* ni chagrin; vous n'êtes pas plus touchée de ma passion que vous le seriez d'un attachment qui ne serait fondé que sur les avantages de votre fortune, et non pas sur les charmes de votre personne . . . Je ne touche ni votre inclination ni votre coeur, et ma présence ne vous donne ni plaisir ni *trouble.*" '

In another place:

' " Je n'ai rien de fâcheux dans l'esprit," répondit-elle avec un air embarrassé; " mais le *tumulte* de la Cour est si grand, et il y a toujours un si grand monde chez vous, qu'il est impossible que le corps et l'esprit ne se lassent, et que l'on ne cherche du *repos.*" " Le *repos,*" répliqua-t-il, " n'est guère propre pour une personne de votre âge." '

*Agitation* stands for an activity which may be good or bad, which may drive people *à servir ou à nuire* and this is the crux of the problem. There is no *public* ' disorder ' to begin with, but the subterranean ' agitation ' gradually undermines order and leads to disaster.

The world of the *Princesse de Clèves* is a world in which the existence of absolute values is taken for granted, in which it is natural to speak of measure and proportion. Thus we read of ' un personnage si *éloigné* de la *vérité,*' ' une opinion si *opposée* à la *vérité,*' ' une fidélité *exacte,*' ' un éclat *proportionné* à son *dessein,*' 'une qualité *proportionnée* à sa beauté ' and—most striking of all in its suggestion of controlled passion—' la plus *violente* et la plus *respectueuse* passion.' Yet this intense desire for measure and proportion, this emphasis on purpose (*dessein*), is accompanied by an intense fear that measure and proportion will be exceeded with disastrous results. The prevalence of words like *opposé, violence, combat* and *effort* betray a tension, a sense of strain of which all the characters are aware. For they are extremely conscious of the emptiness and hollowness of their slogans when it comes to a crisis and of the gulf which threatens to open at any moment:

' " Vous êtes sur le bord du *précipice* [says Madame de Chartres to her daughter when she becomes aware of her

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*inclination* for Monsieur de Nemours]; il faut de grands *efforts* et de grandes *violences* pour vous retenir.'' '

We read of the husband:

' Il ne trouvait de tous côtés que des *précipices* et des *abîmes*.'

The novelist's principal interest is a moral one, is centred in the conduct of man in society. She displays a power of psychological analysis that goes beyond anything which had previously appeared in the novel, but her interest in the physical appearance of her characters seems at first to be purely formal:

' Il fut surpris de la grande beauté de Mademoiselle de Chartres, et il en fut surpris avec raison: la blancheur de son teint et ses cheveux blonds lui donnaient un éclat que l'on n'a jamais vu qu'à elle; tous ses traits étaient réguliers, et son visage et sa personne étaient pleins de grâce et de charme.'

All that we learn from this is that the heroine is fair and has regular features, but we never see the woman herself. When we read of Monsieur de Nemours:

' Mais ce prince était un chef-d'oeuvre de la nature; ce qu'il avait de moins admirable, c'était d'être l'homme du monde le mieux fait et le plus beau. Ce qui le mettait au-dessus des autres était une valeur incomparable et un agrément dans son esprit, dans son visage et dans ses actions que l'on n'a jamais vu qu'à lui seul.'

the features of the man remain as indistinct as those of the woman. But the writer's use of words is interesting. Words that *appear* to describe physical attributes are in fact used psychologically and what looks like a formal and generalized description of a person is really a careful description of the effect of the person on a spectator. The use in both passages of the words *que l'on n'a jamais vu qu'à elle* and *que l'on n'a jamais vu qu'à lui seul* is not a sign of weakness of descriptive power; it underlines the real intention of the writer and prepares the way for the extraordinary moral drama which is the central experience of the book.

The book itself is a criticism of the standards which are the bulwark against ' disorder ' and one of the most important passages describes the ' moral education ' of the heroine:

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'Après avoir perdu son mari, elle [Madame de Chartres] avait passé plusieurs années sans revenir à la Cour. Pendant cette absence, elle avait donné ses soin à l'éducation de sa fille; mais elle ne travailla pas seulement à cultiver son esprit et sa beauté, elle songea aussi à lui donner de la vertu et à la lui rendre aimable. La plupart des mères s'imaginent qu'il suffit de ne parler jamais de galanterie devant les jeunes personnes pour les en éloigner; Madame de Chartres avait une opinion opposée: elle faisait souvent à sa fille des peintures de l'amour, elle lui montrait ce qu'il a d'agréable, pour la persuader plus aisément sur ce qu'elle lui en apprenait de dangereux; elle lui contait le peu de sincérité des hommes, leurs tromperies et leur infidélité, les malheurs domestiques où plongent les engagements; et elle lui faisait voir, d'un autre côté, quelle tranquillité suivait la vie d'une honnête femme, et combien la vertu donnait d'éclat et d'élévation à une personne qui avait de la beauté et de la naissance; mais elle lui faisait voir aussi combien il était difficile de conserver cette vertu que par une extrême défiance de soi-même, et par un grand soin de s'attacher à ce qui seul peut faire le bonheur d'une femme, qui est d'aimer son mari et d'en être aimée.'

'Les *Maximes* de La Rochefoucauld,' wrote Sainte-Beuve[4], 'ne contredisent en rien le Christianisme, bien qu'elles s'en passent.' Some critics have declared that La Rochefoucauld and Madame de La Fayette were among the first apostles of what has since become known as *la morale laïque*. This description of the 'progressive mother' in the seventeenth century certainly appears to lend colour to the theory, but it seems to me that the novelist is concerned to show the inadequacy of contemporary moral values and that there is no evidence that she accepted the code herself. For here we find a woman attempting to instil the common virtues from which traditional sanctions have been removed. The precariousness of 'virtue' is apparent from the statement that Madame de Chartres tried to make it appear *aimable* to her daughter. When we ask: What is virtue? the answer seems to be: conforming to the standards accepted by society. When we ask: Why should people conform? the answer is: because men are faithless and failure to do

[4] *Portraits de femmes*, p. 303.

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so brings *malheurs domestiques*. When we press for something more definite, we are told that the reward of virtue is that the best people will think well of you and you will possess that *tranquillité* which graces the home of the *honnête femme*. And if one is beset by temptation, if one is inclined to plunge into ' agitation ' and risk ' disorder '? Then one must cling to the only things that can bring happiness to a woman—' to love one's husband and to be loved by him.' In other words, when you look into it you find that there are no absolutes in this world and that ' virtue ' means little more than ' keeping up appearances.'[5]

This then is the slender moral armament with which the Princess is launched into the pleasant but very dangerous atmosphere of the Court and it is not surprising that it proves inadequate. The discussion between the Prince and his fiancée in which he reproaches her for not feeling *inquiétude* or *trouble* when he appears ends with the words:

> ' Mademoiselle de Chartres ne savait que répondre, et ces distinctions étaient au-dessus de ses connaissances. Monsieur de Clèves ne voyait que trop combien elle était éloignée d'avoir pour lui des sentiments qui le pouvaient satisfaire, puisqu'il lui paraissait même qu'elle ne les entendait pas.'

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[5]The shallowness of Madame de Chartres' views is evident from her comments on the relations between Henri II and Madame de Valentinois:

> ' " Il est vrai," répondit-elle, " que ce n'est ni le mérite ni la fidélité de Madame de Valentinois qui a fait naître la passion du Roi, ni qui l'a conservée; et c'est aussi en quoi il n'est pas excusable: car, si cette femme avait eu de la jeunesse et de la beauté, jointe à sa naissance; qu'elle eût aimé le Roi avec une fidélité exacte, qu'elle l'eût aimé par rapport à sa seule personne, sans intérêt de grandeur ni de fortune, et sans se servir de son pouvoir que pour les choses honnêtes ou agréables au Roi même, il faut avouer qu'on aurait eu de la peine à s'empêcher de louer ce prince du grand attachement qu'il a pour elle." '

The implication of this passage is that youth and perseverance in an irregular union not only excuse it, but give it a sort of perverted moral value which is held up for admiration.

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This means that in spite of the *peintures de l'amour* the Princess was protected for a time by her own innocence and her mother reflects on this with satisfaction:

> 'Madame de Chartres admirait la sincérité de sa fille, et elle l'admirait avec raison, car jamais personne n'en a eu une si grande et si naturelle; mais elle n'admirait pas moins que son coeur ne fût point touché, et d'autant plus plus qu'elle voyait bien que le prince de Cléves ne l'avait pas touchée, non plus que les autres.'

Her husband could hardly be expected to feel the same satisfaction:

> 'Monsieur de Clèves ne trouva pas que Mademoiselle de Chartres eût changé de sentiment en changeant de nom. La qualité de mari lui donna de plus grands privilèges, mais elle ne lui donna pas une autre place dans le coeur de sa femme. Cela fit aussi que, pour être son mari, il ne laissa pas d'être son amant, parce qu'il avait toujours quelque chose à souhaiter au delà de sa possession; et quoiqu'elle vécut parfaitement bien avec lui, il n'était pas entièrement heureux. Il conservait pour elle une passion violente et inquiète qui troublait sa joie.'

The Princess indeed presents the appearance of a sleep-walker. The book is not merely a record of her awakening; it is the record of a progress in self-knowledge which is purely destructive and which leads from the theoretical and unreal *peintures de l'amour* to the very real torment caused by her *inclination* for Monsieur de Nemours. It is not long before the 'agitation' of the Court disturbs a state which is due simply to lack of experience and the stages in her downfall follow one another relentlessly. When the novelist writes:

> 'Il [Monsieur de Nemours] fit en peu de temps une grande impression dans son coeur.'

the words convey the powerful but still vague impression that the accomplished Duke makes upon the girl. It is left to the mother to reveal the nature of these confused feelings to her daughter and when she says:

> '"Vous avez de *l'inclination* pour Monsieur de Nemours"'

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the feelings not only become precise, but the development of the novel is carried a step forward. This development proceeds with that logic for which the seventeenth century in France is justly famous:

> ' Et elle avait ignoré jusqu'alors les inquiétudes mortelles de la défiance et de la jalousie; elle n'avait pensé qu'à se défendre d'aimer Monsieur de Nemours, et elle n'avait point encore commencé à craindre qu'il en aimât une autre.

The *morale laïque* is successful in the sense that the Princess is not ' unfaithful ' to her husband in deed, but her love for Monsieur de Nemours causes ' disorders ' of another kind which destroy the Prince. It is only then that the moral drama reaches its climax. The Princess passes from a state of ' violent affliction,' of revulsion for the man whom she holds responsible for the death of a model husband, to a state of *tristesse et langueur*. It is at this point that Monsieur de Nemours decides to renew his advances:

> ' Elle alla vers les fenêtres pour voir où elles donnaient; elle trouva qu'elle voyait tout son jardin et la face de son appartement; et, lorsqu'elle fut dans sa chambre, elle remarqua aisément cette même fenêtre où l'on lui avait dit que venait cet homme. La pensée que c'était Monsieur de Nemours changea entièrement la situation de son esprit; *elle ne se trouva plus dans un certain triste repos qu'elle commençait à goûter; elle se sentit inquiète et agitée* . . .[6]

This passage illustrates very well the skill with which the novelist uses the words *repos, inquiète* and *agitée* to convey a personal attitude towards life which gives her book its enduring value.

It is in these closing pages that the influence of La Rochefoucauld's views is most apparent:

> ' " Je vous avoue [she says to Monsieur de Nemours], que vous m'avez inspiré des sentiments qui m'étaient inconnus devant que de vous avoir vu, et dont j'avais même si peu d'idée qu'ils me donnèrent d'abord une surprise qui augmentait encore le trouble qui les suit toujours." '

But, she hastens to add:

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[6] Italics mine.

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' " Cet aveu n'aura point de suite, et je suivrai les règles austères que mon devoir m'impose." '

The *règles austères* and the *devoir* have, to be sure, a solid, reassuring ring, but it is precisely the hollowness of these concepts that the writer sets out to reveal. When Monsieur de Nemours points out that there is no longer any conflict between her ' sentiments ' and her ' virtue,' she makes a very surprising answer:

' " Je sais bien qu'il n'y a rien de plus difficile que ce que j'entreprends," répliqua Madame de Clèves; " je me défie de mes forces, au mileu de mes raisons; *ce que je crois devoir à la mémoire de Monsieur de Clèves serait faible, s'il n'était soutenu par l'intérêt de mon repos;* et les raisons de mon repos ont besoin d'être soutenues de celles de mon devoir; mais, quoique je me défie de moi-même, je crois que je ne vaincrai jamais mes scrupules, et je n'espère pas aussi de surmonter l'inclination que j'ai pour vous. Elle me rendra malheureuse, et je me priverai de votre vue, quelque violence qu'il m'en coûte." '[7]

' Duty ' is far from being the disinterested affair that it is in Corneille or that the Princess tries to persuade herself that it is. Her primary concern is for her own *repos* and, as she remarks in another passage, she is convinced that with his natural inclination to gallantry, Monsieur de Nemours' passion for her would hardly survive marriage—that only happened with the incomparable Monsieur de Clèves—and he would disturb her peace with other adventures. In other words, ' duty ' is nothing but a mental fiction which is used to justify an attitude of complete negation, a refusal to take any further part in life, and it is a sign of the miraculous clairvoyance which distinguishes the seventeenth century that the Princess admits it:

' " Il n'y a point d'obstacle, Madame," reprit Monsieur de Nemours: " vous seule vous opposez à mon bonheur; vous seule vous imposez une loi que la vertu et la raison ne vous sauraient imposer." " Il est vrai," répliqua-t-elle, " que *je sacrifie beaucoup à un devoir qui ne subsiste que dans mon imagination.*" '[8]

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[7] and [8]Italics mine.

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The final comment completes the picture:

> ' Il se passa un assez grand combat en elle-même; enfin elle surmonta les restes de cette passion, qui était affaiblie par les sentiments que st maladie lui avait donnés. Les pensées de la mort lui avaient reproché la mémoire de Monsieur de Clèves. Ce souvenir, qui s'accordait à son devoir, s'imprima fortement dans son coeur.'

The moral is obvious. The effects of passion are completely destructive. The conflict does not strengthen and purify as it does in Corneille. It leads to an incapacity for life, to the complete disintegration and collapse of personality. Monsieur de Clèves dies and his wife retires to her convent. The religious ending must not be misunderstood. There is no conversion here; the wife turns her back on life and lingers on for a few years, a pathetic, broken woman.

*La Princesse de Clèves* does not bulk large in Lytton Strachey's *Landmarks in French Literature,* yet it is undoubtedly a landmark not only in French literature, but also in the history of the novel. The work of Madame de La Fayette marks a complete break with the gaudy, pretentious romances of her time; it is something that must be recognized at once as a modern psychological novel, as the precursor of the novels of Stendhal, Constant and Flaubert.

Its importance is not merely historical. It is in itself a remarkable work of art which possesses in a high degree the virtues of the great masters of the century—their clarity, insight and economy. It is a searching criticism of a highly civilized and to a great extent a homogeneous society which nevertheless contains within itself the germs of its own dissolution. The characters are in no sense moral abstractions; there is none of the fumbling, none of the faltering and uncertainty that one sometimes finds in the work of even the greatest of the nineteenth-century novelists. They have their place in the community and they are drawn with a sureness that reveals a profound belief in life; but though they are symbols of civilized values which are properly held up for our admiration, it is apparent that the sanctions which produced these values are beginning to disappear. For Madame de La Fayette belonged to an age of transition which has strong affinities with our own. Civilization seemed to have survived the beliefs that created it and the task of

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the artist was to sift and test all commonly accepted beliefs and assumptions, to separate the true from the false and to point out the weaknesses which threatened to undermine the whole social order. This is what Madame de La Fayette did in her finest work. She showed that political corruption and intrigue, ambition and licence, were sapping the foundations of society and gradually infecting even its soundest members. They were too intelligent to be unaware of the danger; they might make heroic efforts to resist the disintegrating influences; but a fundamental uncertainty about all moral sanctions made them exceptionally vulnerable, so that when the test came they simply collapsed.

The book is also a warning that we should do well to heed. For the most striking thing about the society that it describes is the contrast between the elegant superstructure and its internal weaknesses, is the fact that such a high degree of civilization should exist beside such profound corruption, presenting a dangerous illusion of soundness and health.

MARTIN TURNELL.

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# A CRITICAL THEORY OF JANE AUSTEN'S WRITINGS

## (II)

## 'LADY SUSAN' into 'MANSFIELD PARK' (ii)

WHAT kind of change did she make beside that of form, that will account for the length of time she is said to have spent on the third version of this episode in Eliza's history? I have hitherto investigated the elements of character, plot and setting that went to constitute *Mansfield Park*. We must now examine it for evidence of another kind. When *Pride and Prejudice* appeared she wrote of it to her sister:

> 'The work is rather too light, and bright, and sparkling; it wants shade; it wants to be stretched out here and there with a long chapter of sense, if it could be had . . .'

The letter then goes off into characteristic humour, at the expense of the idea she has started, which need not prevent us seeing a serious self-criticism intended and no doubt long since made. For the week before (January 29, 1813) she had written to her sister: 'Now I will try and write of something else; and it shall be a complete change of subject—ordination.' Since *Mansfield Park* was entirely finished by the summer of the same year, according to the received account, she had been at this final revision for two years (though it is evident that *Pride and Prejudice,* which was substantially rewritten between 1811 and 1812, must have made a hole in the first of these years at least). Yet mention of the subject in this way suggests that she must be breaking to Cassandra the fact of *Mansfield Park's* existence. With its treatment of an old family sore and its new serious tone and theme she perhaps feared it would be a shock to her sister as well as to admirers of *Pride and Prejudice*. [Actually, *Mansfield Park,* owing to its high moral tone, was more popular than its predecessor, even in her own circle—though not

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with her brothers.] But in this same letter she is enquiring of Cassandra ' whether Northamptonshire is a country of hedgerows.' Mansfield is in Northamptonshire, and according to tradition she intended to employ in this novel a scene such as (with her thrifty habits) she used up later (Northamptonshire apparently not being a country, like her native Hampshire, of double hedgerows) in *Persuasion*. There Anne overhears the pregnant conversation between Captain Wentworth and Louisa in the hedge; Fanny was probably to overhear Edmund and Miss Crawford by means of the convenient hedgerow, instead of the less dramatic manner in which she gains all her knowledge of Edmund's progress in Miss Crawford's esteem. But what is interesting in this is that in January, 1813, the novel was still apparently in a fluid state.[16] May we not conjecture that it was merely being turned over in her mind while *Pride and Prejudice* was on the stocks, and at last rewritten from the epistolary version only in the spring and summer of 1813? I think we can find more evidence to this effect. Henry's wife Eliza, formerly the Comtesse de Feuillide, died in April, 1813. The Austen-Leighs say: ' She had suffered from a long and painful illness, and the end was " a release at last " '. The knowledge that Eliza was dying—Jane herself writes of ' her long and dreadful illness '—would revive all those earlier feelings about her disposition and conduct which make Mary Crawford at once so subtle and realistic a study and yet so loaded with the author's animus. And her death would make it permissible to publish such a novel, Henry not having any inconvenient delicacy and no other member of the family being recognizably in the text except the flattering portrait of Charles as William Price. The solemn circumstances of Eliza's wretched end, contrasting so markedly with the memory of her coquettish youth, must have helped to weigh down the treatment on the side of solemn moral and horror of worldliness, associating well with the artist's sense that *Pride and Prejudice* was a kind of success she would not care to repeat. I think the haste

[16]As far as the hedgerow goes, it may be objected that she intended only a lightning alteration of a dull narrative piece into a dramatic scene, as she rewrote overnight the flat re-engagement of Captain Wentworth and Anne into the brilliant White Hart chapter. But the ordination idea is in another class from a local change of form.

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with which the novel must have been put together, assuming my theory that it was in effect ' written ' in the spring and summer of 1813, accounts for the disparities in style and tone and treatment mentioned at the beginning of this article. She had no time to assimilate all the elements we have noticed, as she had had in the novel which had just left her hands and was to have in the next; we may see the same kind of thing in *Persuasion,* where the business of Mrs. Smith, so clumsily patched on, of Mrs. Clay's unconvincing intrigue with Mr. Elliot, and the episode of Dick Musgrove which sticks out so unpleasantly (it came from the life, if I have interpreted the *Letters* correctly) had not the chance, owing to her premature death, of getting worked in smoothly.

For I think it evident that the epistolary version of 1808-9 differed very considerably from *Mansfield Park* as we know it. If the ordination theme was a final addition, then Dr. Grant was too, for he is there to show what a priest ought not to be, in contrast with Edmund, and Tom's profligate debts and similar episodes must have been patched on at the same time. The discussions with Henry Crawford and Mary that Edmund has at different times on ordination, the conduct of church services, etc., could more easily have been written in, and Mary's original hesitations about accepting Edmund may have been due only to his not being the heir (as in *Lady Susan*). We may remark that all these conversations are dramatic, and what could hardly have been managed in letters. And the moral tone is equally seen to have been ' written in.' What is the natural, the instinctive tone, of the author? Is it not that felt in such passages as these?

> I believe there is scarcely a young lady in the united kingdoms who would not rather put up with the misfortune of being sought by a clever, agreeable man, than to have him driven away by the vulgarity of her nearest relations.
>
> She could not, though only eighteen, suppose Mr. Crawford's attachment would hold out for ever; she could not but imagine that steady, unceasing discouragement from herself would put an end to it in time. How much time she might, in her own fancy, allot for its dominion, is another concern. It would not be fair to enquire into a young lady's exact estimate of her own perfections.

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> Sir Thomas was most cordially anxious for the perfection of Mr. Crawford's character in that point. He wished him to be a model of constancy; and fancied the best means of effecting it would be by not trying him too long.
>
> I purposely abstain from dates on this occasion, that every one may be at liberty to fix their own, aware that the cure of unconquerable passions, and the transfer of unchanging attachments, must vary much as to time in different people.—I only intreat every body to believe that exactly at the time when it was quite natural that it should be so, and not a week earlier, Edmund did cease to care about Miss Crawford, and became as anxious to marry Fanny, as Fanny herself could desire.

This is recognizably a similar tone, with its combination of acid amusement and cynical estimate of motive, to that of *Sense and Sensibility* and all the work up to and including *Pride and Prejudice*—we think at once of the picture of the united Ferrars family at the end, of the last sentence of the same novel, of Edward's coming to Barton Cottage to propose to Elinor:

> . . . it is to be supposed, in spite of the jealousy with which he had once thought of Colonel Brandon, in spite of the modesty with which he rated his own deserts, and the politeness with which he talked of his doubts, he did not, upon the whole, expect a very cruel reception. It was his business, however, to say that he *did*, and he said it very prettily. What he might say on the subject a twelvemonth after must be referred to the imagination of husbands and wives.

And in fact the last quotation I have made above from *Mansfield Park* is in the whole tone of *Lady Susan* and particularly in that of the passage of which it is an echo:

> Frederica was therefore fixed in the family of her Uncle and Aunt, till such time as Reginald De Courcy could be talked, flattered and finessed into an affection for her —, which, allowing leisure for the conquest of his attachment to her Mother, for his abjuring all future attachments and detesting the Sex, might be reasonably looked for in the course of a Twelvemonth. Three months might have done it in general, but Reginald's feelings were no less lasting than lively.

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It is from *Lady Susan* that the early habit of not taking too seriously the puppets' feelings is carried over into *Mansfield Park*. But there is a new habit of taking them very seriously indeed, at their own valuation, or rather with the conventional attitude to them, and the more subtle kind of irony in the book is bound up with this new attitude, occurring as a relief from it, slipping in in spite of the author.

For the tone of the new *Mansfield Park*, that belongs with the moralising about worldiness and lack of principle, is not to be found in *Sense and Sensibility* or *Pride and Prejudice* or any of the earlier stories or fragmentary writings, or in the letters that survive. I mean the passages of this kind:

> In their very last conversation, Miss Crawford . . . had still been Miss Crawford, still shewn a mind led astray and bewildering, and without any suspicion of being so; darkened, yet fancying itself light.
>
> . . . the purity of her principles added yet a keener solicitude, when she considered how little useful, how little self-denying, his life had (apparently) been.

There are many such. We may compare Anne Elliot meditating on Mr. Elliot's past life: 'How could it ever be ascertained that his mind was truly cleansed?' This is the language of a religious change of heart, and conflicts strikingly with the tone and implications of the delicate cynicism of

> In this world, the penalty is less equal than could be wished; but without presuming to look forward to a juster appointment hereafter, we may fairly consider a man of sense like Henry Crawford, to be providing for himself no small portion of vexation and regret . . .

Such deeply-felt passages contrast just as strongly with the perfunctory attention given to the conventional moral, as instanced by the famous 'Let other pens dwell on guilt and misery.' Now when did this change in the author occur? It was after the 1808-9 version of *Mansfield Park* had been made, because in 1809 there is a letter to her sister declaring she knows she will not like Hannah More's improving new novel, *Cœlebs in Search of a Wife*, that her disinclination for it which before Cassandra's description

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was affected, is now real: 'I do not like the Evangelicals.' But in 1814 in the letter to Fanny Knight concerning the suitor her niece cannot make up her mind about, she defends him against Fanny's objection of his intolerable religious earnestness, saying: 'I am by no means convinced that we ought not all to be evangelicals, and am at least persuaded that they who are so from reason and feeling must be happiest and safest.' The choice of Ordination as a theme then may be taken as indicating a conscious change about 1813. [There are unfortunately no letters of 1812.] *Pride and Prejudice* is a pagan work, so to speak, with its ridicule of Mr. Collins's advice about the proper attitude towards the erring Lydia; I don't know how many readers notice that Sir Thomas actually adopts the Christian attitude to his fallen daughter that Mr. Bennet rejected for himself, and that this time the author evidently thinks it the right one. This upset to the author's poise (associated no doubt with the subject of Eliza which goes back into her own youth) and which has shaken the sound moral taste she had hitherto possessed, is visible only in *Mansfield Park*. In *Emma*, a year later, we see her at the climax of her art and in the completest possible state of control over her writing. The collapse of control at times in *Mansfield Park* is unprecedented in her literary career.

A deeply religious outlook, even if concealed (and with such a family code of unfailing jesting to live up to her tendency would be to conceal it from her coevals as far as possible), would account for the castigation of worldliness in the novel, not only of the reprehensible kind but of varieties which in her previous novels she approves as worldly prudence. Though the noble match Sir James is pressed on Frederica by her mother, yet that is not part of the theme of *Lady Susan*, though an antithesis between heartless ambition and artless affection is just indicated in the early story, for future use no doubt. But prudential marriage (made by Maria with disastrous results, discussed by Mary Crawford with illustrations from her London set, advocated for Fanny by everyone, and finally renounced by Sir Thomas for his son, with dust and ashes self-heaped on that worldly head) is decidedly part of the main theme of *Mansfield Park*. The most striking and technically remarkable part of the novel is that telling of Maria's engagement and wedding, something unprecedented in Jane Austen's art as a sustained effect. These are reported with the detachment of

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a looker-on, with a skilfully implied disgust at such a heartless mockery of courtship and marriage. But if these effects are sincerely achieved, there are others that ring dubiously. Every one remembers the hollow moralisings of Fanny and Edmund. And for the first time in her writings Victorianism makes its appearance. The kind of thing I mean is what comes to a head in Edmund's horror at Mary's indelicacy:

> Guess what I must have felt. To hear the woman whom—no harsher name than folly given!—So voluntarily, so freely, so coolly to canvass it! No reluctance, no horror, no feminine—shall I say? no modest loathings!

This is quite unaccountable to the reader of the *Letters*, where there are certainly no modest loathings.[17] There is an element of self-flagellation here. Loathing of one's former self may quite sincerely be overdone in the first heat of reaction; I do not think we need accuse Miss Austen of paying deliberate lip-service to the theory of feminine propriety. A very revealing instance of something related to this is the censure heaped on Mary Crawford for her freedom in speaking of her dissolute uncle and ill-tempered clerical brother-in-law. Mary's criticism is certainly justified, and harmless besides, yet we are told it denotes an improper way of thinking and speaking. But Mary merely exercises the same freedom in criticizing her relations as her creator manifests towards her own far less exceptionable relations in her correspondence. This attack on Mary seems to be due to a sense of guilt, and is inspired I imagine by a sense that it is that part of her earlier self which she had in common with her cousin Eliza. We know from her letters that Jane too flirted enthusiastically (it is a happy hit of Mr.

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[17] *cf.* ' I am proud to say that I have a very good eye at an Adultress . . . I fixed upon the right one from the first . . . She was highly rouged, and looked rather quietedly and contentedly silly than anything else.' *Letters*, May, 1801. Elinor had had no tremors in discussing Willoughby's relations with Eliza Williams, a few years before *Mansfield Park*, and shortly after *Mansfield Park* Emma Woodhouse concludes as a matter of course that Mrs. Churchill's death may have brought to light the existence of half-a-dozen natural children of Mr. Churchill's.

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Forster's to have remarked that ' in the earlier letters Lydia Bennet is all-pervading '), talked lightly and joked censoriously. She displays impatience with her youth in the other novels prepared for the press about this time. The business of the theatricals is all in keeping with the theory I have advanced. Theatricals were not frowned on at Steventon as they were at Mansfield, the young Austens had their theatre in the barn; instead of Sir Thomas to ban there was Mrs. Austen to encourage[18]; and *Lovers' Vows* was improper only on theoretical grounds, whereas *Bon Ton* and *High Life Below Stairs* and the farces in the Steventon repertoire were vulgar and possibly worse. Jane seems to have enjoyed the theatre without any qualms, if only with modified rapture, throughout her life. But amateur theatricals were connected for her with those that at Steventon culminated in her cousin's engagement to her brother. So her distaste for them is made out to be justified on moral grounds in the novel that embalms this early experience. She makes Tom's repentance include ' self-reproach arising from the deplorable event in Wimpole Street, to which he felt himself accessory by all the dangerous intimacy of his unjustifiable theatre,' and Sir Thomas condemns the acting as an ' unsafe amusement.'[19]

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[18]A letter from Eliza to another cousin is quoted in the *Life and Letters* begging her (Philadelphia Walter) to come and stay at the rectory ' provided she could bring herself to act, " for my Aunt Austen declares ' she has not room for any *idle young people* ' " '. Philadelphia seems to have been unable to bring herself to act on any terms—a hint for Fanny's situation in the casting of *Lovers' Vows* at Mansfield.

[19]The stress is always on the acting and not on the play itself. Hence I cannot agree with Miss E. M. Butler's case (*Modern Languages Review*, July, 1933, ' *Mansfield Park* and Kotzebue's *Lovers' Vows* ') that a moral protest against Kotzebue's lax moral standard is the source of *Mansfield Park* and that Jane Austen ' condemned it mercilessly and punished it savagely ' in her novel. Miss Butler's article does at least confirm my account of the novel as giving the reader a sense of something strained in the moralising and unnatural in the condemnation, for this I imagine is what she felt impelled to explain by contending that the plot of the novel is an inversion of the play. One agrees with Miss Husbands in her reply

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The censure Mary Crawford comes in for is so much heavier than there is any occasion for, as matters stand in *Mansfield Park*. She stands in Fanny's way chiefly, and the author has identified her interest with Fanny's, but she stands there innocently. She has done nothing deliberate to attract Edmund, but her mere attractiveness somehow appears reprehensible. She does not make herself out to be other than she is—in fact she shocks him constantly by refusing to subscribe even by lip to his idealism and standards of propriety. Where Edmund is concerned she struggles between following the instincts of her heart and the promptings of ambition, and though it is no doubt reprehensible in her that the latter win, from Fanny's point of view this is all to the good. She is not like Lady Susan a siren, a hypocrite or a villainess of any kind, but she incurs about as much blame from the author. This is unjust morally and unsound enough artistically to strike the reader as a serious flaw. Why did not so acute a writer as Miss Austen notice this herself? The answer, as I have shown, is partly autobiographical and partly a matter of literary history. In rewriting any book it is hard to keep clear altogether of the spirit of the original: Lady Susan's culpability is carried over to her successor. Lady Susan moreover, as Mrs. Craven, was particularly culpable in her conduct towards her daughter, the original of Fanny, and though Miss Crawford has no obligation to Fanny the relation between them is the same mixture of fearfulness on the one side and cruelty (unconscious on Mary's part) on the other—there is a great deal of analysis, quite unnecessary to the plot, devoted to the nature of the intimacy between the two girls, something unknown to the English novel before and not paralleled anywhere else in this author's work. The subject must have deeply interested her. We may conjecture that Jane's attitude in her youth towards Eliza

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in the same journal (April, 1934) that ' Likenesses there certainly are, but they are by no means fitted to bear the weight which Miss Butler attaches to them.' The play, so useful in the first volume, probably influenced the novelist to a certain extent in adapting all her diverse materials to the revision of *Lady Susan*, without her being quite aware of the extent of its influence. And some deliberate reference was no doubt intended as well, as reference to *Cecilia* is I believe intended in *Pride and Prejudice*.

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was the same mixture of personal fascination and moral repulsion that we find fixed in not merely Fanny's but also the author's attitude to Mary Crawford. The tone of Mary's ordinary conversation is seen to be something that the author cannot stomach. Though in the other novels the conversation of several characters is felt to be insufferably silly or vulgar or conceited or otherwise disagreeable, there is nothing that arouses the same sense of moral distaste as Mary Crawford's clever playfulness. Mary differs from Lady Susan in being something of the author herself as well as much that she was not. There is even a momentary defence put up for her wit, by Edmund who is in love with her,—'The right of a lively mind, seizing whatever may contribute to its own amusement or that of others; perfectly allowable, when untinctured by ill humour or roughness.' This is certainly the defence the author of *Pride and Prejudice* would have advanced if her right to criticize had been questioned, and such a self-justification must have satisfied her up to the date of rewriting *Mansfield Park* for publication. Then, with so much else in herself, it came up for reconsideration.

This unnatural censure, to be found only in this novel, of Jane Austen's own standards of judgment, of her independence of outlook and her own instinctive values, is what the discerning reader finds intolerable. To deny his own light is the worst offence of which an artist can be guilty. But we can now understand how it came about. It was the delightful but not admirable cousin, the friend of her girlhood but now, after a phase as comtesse at Versailles, revealing a character less congenial, who was leading the favourite brother into a wholly unsuitable marriage. Therefore what she admired in that cousin must also be wrong, even when it was something they had in common. Everything that Mary says, however witty or intelligent, and everything that she does, however kind it may at first appear, is exposed as unfeeling, selfish or worse.[20] One recent critic[21] has complained that Jane Austen is

[20] *e.g.* the necklace episode. Edmund is charmed by Mary's kind, thoughtful attention to Fanny in offering her a necklace so that she may wear William's cross on it at the ball. He falls into 'a reverie of fond reflection, uttering only now and then a few half-sentences of praise.' A hundred pages later Mary lets out that the idea of lending Fanny the necklace, a present from Henry to his sister,

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' incapable of appreciating such pleasant worldlings as Mary Crawford.' This is to accuse himself and not the author: she takes care that we shall have no excuse, if we read carefully and relate the scattered passages that are meant to be dove-tailed, for finding the Crawfords pleasant. Lady Susan, in whom they first took shape, was an entirely unpleasant worldling; she has been toned down to match a setting of everyday life, that is all. We get a glimpse of the ' knowledge of the world ' that Eliza de Feuillide brought to the rustics at Steventon, and which is so alien to the feeling and sentiment of Jane Austen's world, in Mary's speeches to Henry and Fanny about Henry's courtship:

> ' . . . I know you, I know that a wife you *loved* would be the happiest of women, and that even when you ceased to love, she would yet find in you the liberality and good-breeding of a gentleman.'
>
> ' But this I will say, that his fault, the liking to make girls a little in love with him, is not half so dangerous to a wife's happiness, as a tendency to fall in love himself, which he has never been addicted to. And I do seriously and truly believe that he is attached to you in a way that he never was to any woman before; that he loves you with all his heart, and will love you as nearly for ever as possible. If any man ever loved a woman for ever, I think Henry will do as much for you.'

This style of talking, reasonable as it is and based as it is on knowledge of one order of life, is distasteful to our novelist ; we are made to feel that she considers it offensive and revealing a shallow nature. She loathes the society where such wisdom is current, but she is not content to make it seem odious, she must claim moral sanctions for her instinctive distaste. She must prove it to be wicked as well as cheap. We are instructed to regard the world of the Crawfords

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was entirely Henry's; we know then it was part of his scheme for insinuating himself into Fanny's affections at the time before his intentions became honourable; ' It was his own doing entirely, his own thought. I am ashamed to say, that it had never entered my head.' Mary had actually been helping her brother in his efforts to destroy Fanny's peace of mind, we realize.

[21]Lord David Cecil, *Jane Austen*.

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with horror, not merely dislike.

An assumption of the conventional outlook on morality and the sentimental commonplaces it carries with it too easily accompanies religious convictions and at that date perhaps was an inevitable accompaniment of them in a country lady. To this we may ascribe the passages where the acute observer of human nature, the shrewd analyist of motive, gives place to a Charlotte Yonge, for instance that piece, so sentimental and unrealistic, the moral explanation of Henry Crawford's falling in love with Fanny (Ch. 12, Vol. 2). How it contrasts with the flashes of genuine psychological understanding elsewhere in the book. But the old Adam breaks out from time to time, as in the piece about cant at the end of Ch. 13, Vol. 3, and the sly digs at the good Sir Thomas,[22] where we see the author rounding on herself in spite of herself. This accounts for some of the most subtle bits of irony, changes of moral direction or abysses of cynicism opening under the reader's feet, which are thoroughly disconcerting if the reader has not this account of the novel's evolution in his possession. The author sometimes takes a holiday from trying to persuade herself that she feels as she believes she ought to feel. She reverts to her unregenerate youth, with the example of *Lady Susan* before her no doubt.

But she has sacrificed some of the advantages of the simple and consistent story with which she started. She has of course been led into inconsistencies of character—such as Henry Crawford falling in love with Fanny because that, however improbable, is necessary to balance the Mary-Edmund affair and to complicate Fanny's sufferings. Mary is so involved with the author's emotional

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[22] *e.g.* 'Sir Thomas, poor Sir Thomas, a parent, and conscious of errors in his own conduct as a parent, was the longest to suffer. He felt that he ought not to have allowed the marriage, that his daughter's sentiments had been sufficiently known to him to render him culpable in authorizing it, that in doing so he had sacrificed the right to the expedient, and been governed by motives of selfishness and worldly wisdom. These were reflections that required some time to soften; ***but time will do almost every thing.***' [My italics.]

There is contempt here, not only for Sir Thomas but for the tendency of human nature generally to forgive itself too easily.

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and moral life that she is only made possible by abandoning the letter-form of novel: we are deprived thus of Mary's confidence, and if we are left to conjecture for the most part the springs of her impulses—' she would try to be more ambitious than her heart would allow,' for example—that suits the author; Mary does not have to be so consistent and logical as Lady Susan. But the author has sacrificed also a moral advantage; her hands in *Mansfield Park* are tied where in *Lady Susan* they were free, and in this respect the earlier story is more lively than the later novel. In the first version the virtuous people are presented from the devil's point of view, as well as from their own, and we are not meant to be shocked, as we are later with Edmund and Fanny, we are permitted to be exhilarated, for there is some truth in both accounts and we have a sort of wisdom offered us which in *Mansfield Park* is only allowed to flourish on the edges of the scene (as in the summing-up on Mr. Rushworth). Vestiges of Lady Susan's refreshing outlook on the unco' good we have in Mary's levity, but it is allowed to play only upon the Admiral, Dr. Grant, family prayers and such, and we are at once told by the author, speaking through Edmund, how to look upon even this mild irreverence. Mary is awed by Edmund's superiority as Lady Susan never is by the Vernons and De Courcys, and even Henry is never allowed to ridicule Edmund. But we see there is something to be said for Lady Susan's point of view—Mr. Vernon is indeed foolishly credulous and the author herself has no patience with him nor much respect for Reginald; there is undeniably something in Lady Susan's ill-natured account of the interest Mrs. Vernon has in Frederica:

> She is in high favour with her Aunt altogether—because she is so little like myself of course. She is exactly the companion for Mrs. Vernon, who dearly loves to be first, and to have all the sense and all the Conversation to herself; Frederica will never eclipse her.[23]

[23]This is not really true, but we are encouraged by the author's own attitude to feel that there may be something in it. The novelist's next step was to say: Suppose it were true . . . She then had at her disposal the identical relation described as that existing between Emma and Harriet Smith. Frederica is thus actually described by her mother in the same letter, in the same spirit of

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Now in *Mansfield Park* the hatches have been battened down on the insight of the lower nature. Fanny is specifically protected by the author as ' my Fanny '; the author is aware that such protection from criticism is necessary. Hence a certain uneasiness that one senses. Though *Lady Susan* was a remarkable feat, there is no sense of strain apparent in it anywhere. Lady Susan is the character in the story with the brains, and Jane Austen was not the woman to undervalue that distinction (Fanny has to be made out most unconvincingly to be Mary Crawford's ' mental superior ' to enforce her claims as heroine). The earlier story had the advantage of reproducing real life in this respect, where the fascinating worldly cousin had the field to herself. All the reality remains with Mary Crawford, and Fanny like Edmund has no substance, the good cousins are only a stance for moral disapproval. Yet as we have seen, in spite of Jane Austen's determination to sponsor the conventional moral outlook, wisdom, the report of experience, will not be smothered, it breaks out in ways calculated to defeat her intentions.

But to this very inconsistency we owe some of the most interesting portions of the later novel. The original theme of Mansfield (or Churchill) standing for ' heart,' a simple one and not argued in the first book, merely assumed, is whittled down by the circumstances of the novel's evolution, as we have seen, until when the mature woman comes to consider it she cannot flourish it

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irritation: ' I never saw a girl of her age bid fairer to be the sport of mankind. Her feelings are tolerably lively and she is so charmingly artless in their display, as to afford the most reasonable hope of her being ridiculed and despised by every Man who sees her ' and as ' a born simpleton.' This was enough foundation for Harriet's disposition. Poor Frederica had only fallen in love with Reginald at first sight; Harriet was easily produced on this basis by multiplying her susceptibility, and artlessness combined with a propensity for falling in love without encouragement is more suitable for the heroine of a burlesque than for a sentimental heroine as Frederica was meant to be. This very limited kind of artistic imagination is exactly what is described by her nieces (quoted in J. E. Austen-Leigh's *Memoir*) as occasioning the endless stories she made up for them.

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wholeheartedly as a banner as she could in her youth. The Portsmouth episode corrects the theory by bringing it down to the touchstone of the practical test: what is valuable in Mansfield for Fanny turns out not to be 'heart'—strong instinctive feelings freely expressed—of which there is a crude superabundance in her Portsmouth home, but the virtues of civilized existence which, so Fanny discovers with Jane Austen's backing, are a preferable alternative even when 'heart' is mainly absent:

> Yet she thought it would not have been so at Mansfield. No, in her uncle's house there would have been a consideration of times and seasons, a regulation of subject, a propriety, an attention towards everybody which there was not here . . . At Mansfield, no sounds of contention, no raised voice, no abrupt bursts, no tread of violence was ever heard; all preceded in a regular course of cheerful orderliness; every body had their due importance; every body's feelings were consulted. If tenderness could ever be supposed wanting, good sense and good breeding supplied its place.

By the time *Mansfield Park* was rewritten, the author has to admit that either the original structure of the story was crude and unrealistic or that she herself has changed her outlook; she is too sincere an artist to allow it to stand, and, as in so many other respects, the later novel is more subtle, illuminating experience for us, though so often also contradictory and confusing. We see that at this period the kind of life that was organized to run smoothly was what seemed to her the best. *Sense and Sensibility* had been made into a plea, two years before, for that 'candour' and 'address' without which society cannot function; the discussion between Edward, Elinor and Marianne on these lines, and the frequent admonitions to the reader to the same effect that stick out of the book, belong clearly to the final revision of *Sense and Sensibility* for publication in 1811—they are written in the same easy but serious colloquial style as the similar serious discussions in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Mansfield Park,* and have no equivalent in the early work, which is all satire and character-revealing dialogue. I make no apology for calling attention to what should be so obvious, since I have found that these are precisely the passages, with their important implications, that the devoted reader

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of the Austen novels overlooks. Apparently Mrs. Norris and Lady Bertram are now generally felt to be the *raison d'être* for *Mansfield Park*. This would have made its author feel that the novel was a failure, for they are only ornamental additions to the structure and it is the structure that she laboured over so many years.

Then is the book a failure, into which Jane Austen had put so much of herself? Posterity has agreed to place it below *Pride and Prejudice* (though many of her contemporaries, like her own sister, preferred it to all her previous writings when it appeared), and this for her would have been failure, for she was trying to improve on *Pride and Prejudice*, as we have seen. She had most brilliantly written that novel out of a previous immature version[24] by the use almost entirely of dramatic scenes. But *Pride and Prejudice* for that and other reasons leaves a taste of the stage; not only is the wit too uniform, especially in the dialogue which is never without point, but the convention in which it is written has no place for the subtler and finer effects the author must have felt herself capable of when she embarked on the last version of *Mansfield Park*. There, as in *Emma* and *Persuasion*, we see her foregoing the immediate effect of witty rejoinder and humorous character to analyse motive and to build up total effects; in this new manner the human heart is investigated in a new way, every impulse noted and considered with respect, instead of inspiring the easy comments of the earlier automatic and rather unfeeling sprightliness. If the analysis in *Mansfield Park* annoys us by its ejaculatory and panting manner, we must bear in mind that it was the forerunner of a new technique, which made possible the sensitive reflection of the emotions of Emma Woodhouse and Anne Elliot, and that even at its worst it offers us something more interesting than the brief summaries of Elinor Dashwood's and Elizabeth Bennet's states of mind that we are presented with from time to time. In those conversations between Edmund and Fanny, those broken musings of Fanny's and her agitated communings with her heart, something

[24] In letters, I imagine, for she says of the final book: 'I have lop't and crop't so successfully, that I imagine it must be rather shorter than *Sense and Sensibility*'—letters are a spacious way of narrating, and *Pride and Prejudice* has like *Mansfield Park* many signs of a previous epistolary form.

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deeper is being attempted than ever before. There is a real, difficult fidelity to experience. There is an internal glow that proceeds from those palpitating feelings which is what is lacking in the cold formality of *Sense and Sensibility* and even in the hard bright light that illuminates the players in *Pride and Prejudice*.

The irony that is characteristic of the later work is not underlined as in the earlier, it is part of the larger effects and can be quite easily overlooked. For instance, Edmund writing to Fanny at Portsmouth of his visit to Miss Crawford in London and the bad effect her friends there have on her character, is ready to give her up, but ' When I think of her great attachment to you, indeed, and the whole of her judicious, upright conduct as a sister, she appears a very different creature, and I am ready to blame myself . . .' etc. Her ' attachment ' to Fanny is subtly shown in various passages to be worthless, and the judiciousness of her conduct as a sister culminates in keeping Henry in London out of curiosity to see his meeting with Mrs. Rushworth, which Fanny feels to be ' grossly unkind and ill-judged ' and which in fact launches him on the fatal intrigue. The total difference between the early and the later work is that the classical account of her novels as Comedy does not apply to the last three.

In this succession of novels *Mansfield Park* marks the turning-point, and it is like most works of transition in an artist's career in that its most obvious quality is that of not succeeding. In deliberate opposition to its predecessor, it is exaggeratedly undramatic; the contrast to *Pride and Prejudice* is overdone. And though the author wishes to do something different and in a different medium, she is uncertain how to set about it. The letters in *Mansfield Park* are not even successful as letters on the whole, as those of the two earlier novels always are. This is evidently because she is trying to do many things through them, not merely the one simple thing which the letter of a Mr. Collins or Lucy Steele does (reveal the character of the writer in a characteristic attitude) or the letter of Mrs. Gardiner or Darcy (to put us in possession of some necessary information). The letters in *Mansfield Park* are made to serve as devices for forwarding plot and revealing character, as they must have done in the epistolary version, as they do in *Lady Susan;* but this is possible only when the characters are simply conceived and expressed in a bold convention, it becomes impossible if the author

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has a psychological preoccupation, and these letters are in addition overloaded by having to fill in background, report experiences and convey the emotions of their writers in very complicated relationships. It is no wonder that Mary Crawford's letters to Fanny fail to be plausible even by the standards we apply to the epistolary novel of the eighteenth century. Yet we can see how these unsatisfactory letters made possible the wonderful achievement that *Emma* is for it is the experiments made therein that taught their author how to convey through Emma's consciousness, without any but implicit criticism, the whole of that subtle and complicated work. *Emma*, if one thinks only of the English novels that preceded it, is a dazzling achievement. Its author, entirely on her own and without the benefit of theory or of the practice of others, is seen to have somehow discovered the technique of Henry James. In the evolution of *Mansfield Park* we can see her discovering it. *Emma* is the first of her novels *not* to have been drafted in letter form; after *Mansfield Park* this preliminary became unnecessary. *Lady Susan* was a *tour de force*, like *Jonathan Wild*, and its author was justly proud of it, as of the three volumes of earlier work she cherished, but *Mansfield Park*, with all its confusions, discrepancies and unevenness of tone and intention, is something more remarkable in English fiction. If *Mansfield Park* had been only the stodgy setting for the comic characters, Lady Bertram and Mrs. Norris, with lively patches where ' those pleasant worldlings ' the Crawfords make a diversion and spoilt otherwise by an out-of-date morality, an account of the book which most readers would now subscribe to, I gather—if *Mansfield Park* were only this Jane Austen would not be the great novelist she is. For what is the difference between her novels and those of the most accredited of the Bloomsbury novelists of tne 'twenties? Is it only in a greater degree of accomplishment that her novels differ from those of David Garnett, from *Lolly Willowes*, *Crome Yellow* and so forth? I mention this because there was at one time noticeable, in the golden age of Bloomsbury, an attempt by Bloomsbury products to pass Jane Austen off as one of themselves. They alleged she possessed the same kind of witty outlook and the same sophisticated cynicism as they endeavoured to exhibit. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is, to take a much less flagrant instance of critical confusion, like classing *South Wind* and the imitations of Norman Douglas with the novels of

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Peacock. Peacock's entertaining surface and occasional frivolity proceed from a mind that is fundamentally responsible, that takes living and the problems of life and society seriously. The novel with no inside, so strikingly illustrated by *The Sailor's Return* and *They Went,* is something with which neither Peacock nor Jane Austen would have had the slightest sympathy. They do not have to put in Significance, it is implied in the nature of their undertakings. And their technique is something that grows out of their work, like their style. What is now generally felt to be Jane Austen's boring preoccupation with morals and propriety is nevertheless a prerequisite to that view of character which diverts the reader who dislikes its roots so much that he tries to allege that those delightful flowers have none. Jane Austen's novels cannot be assimilated to a taste for P. G. Wodehouse's, and the pretence that what is not humour can be disregarded will not stand investigation. The patronizing cult that has frequently accompanied this attitude is as offensive to the literary critic as it would have been to Miss Austen.[25]

If my account of how Jane Austen composed her novels is still felt to be unconvincing, I can only say that it seems to me not merely borne out by all kinds of evidence, and that it explains what is otherwise inexplicable, but is very much less improbable than the classical account of the Austen novels. It saves us from the contortions that aesthetic criticism (on the *Craft of Fiction* model) has to exhibit in discussing her novels. And it explains her contemptuous allusions to hasty work elsewhere—*e.g.* in the *Letters* she says of *Ida of Athens,* that it ' must be very clever, because it was written, as the authoress says, in three months '; to read the text-books you would think *Pride and Prejudice* was composed even more lightly. This account agrees too with a piece of

[25]A good recent instance of this refusal to accept Jane Austen as anything but the creator of comic parts is Mr. George Sampson's account of her work in *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature* (1941) which ends: ' It is absurd to claim too much for a writer who claimed so little for herself ' [Did she?] ' The true lovers of Jane Austen are those who do not advertise their devotion, but are content to whisper " Dear Jane " as they pause at the grave in the ancient aisle of Winchester Cathedral.'

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evidence that has been quite overlooked, but is of the utmost value since it is the only document by a member of her own generation and by one who knew her literary life intimately; I refer to her brother Henry's Biographical Notice prefixed to the posthumous novels. He says:

> From this place (Chawton) she sent into the world those novels, which by many have been placed on the same shelf as the works of a D'Arblay and an Edgeworth. Some of these novels had been the gradual performances of her previous life, etc.[26]

It is not for nothing, though playfully, that in writing to her nephew she compares her manner of composing to brushwork ' so fine as to produce little effect after much labour '—the last three words are the clue, since we know she was actually very proud of her effects. Another corrective to the complacent account of her ' comedy ' is her complaint that her kinsman Egerton Brydges in his novel draws characters ' for the sake of delineation.' Her own aim, it is apparent, was to have no loose ends, no padding, no characterization for its own sake; she was the opposite kind of novelist to Scott, and had at any rate the intention of putting in nothing except for a clearly defined reason—to contribute to the plot, the drama of feelings, the moral structure, or the necessary psychology. Her own practice is meant to be in accordance with Cassandra's ' starched notions,' and if these principles of composition are violated I conclude that it is reasonable to assume that there is some reason for this. And I have tried to show in many cases what the reasons were. There is unfortunately not room here to recapitulate those reasons and what they imply about her methods of composition. But I must guard against one misapprehension. I have been accused of trying to write a *Road to Xanadu* about the Austen novels. On the contrary. Jane Austen was not a poet, least of all a poet like Coleridge, she was a novelist like Henry

[26]Though there are some falsifications in the Biographical Notice, I see no reason why he should have invented the above. Henry was an Evangelical clergyman by this time, and we can see in his notice that doctoring of his sister's personality to suit a Victorian taste which is so evident in their nephew Edward's *Memoir* later, a tradition which has never been broken.

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James and Joseph Conrad, who had a very high degree of awareness of the origin and adaptations of their material, and who took an intense interest in the deliberate shaping of their novels. What a preface to *Pride and Prejudice* Jane Austen could have written! Whereas all that Coleridge knew about *Kubla Khan* was that he had dreamt it. The change from the simple technique of *Lady Susan* to the final, complicated, laboriously achieved *Mansfield Park* was something she could have accounted for better than we can. The shift from composing with the separate points of view of Lady Susan and Mrs. Vernon to producing the novel through Fanny's consciousness almost entirely, is a technical change quite in accordance with Henry James's theory and practice.

I will not end therefore on a consideration of the failure of *Mansfield Park,* but on its achievement. I have appeared to contradict myself, to describe the creation of *Mansfield Park* as laborious but to advance a theory that it was in effect written in the spring and summer of 1813. But in view of her regular process of writing a novel in versions which grow like snowballs as they advance, gathering in earlier oddments and satiric experiments and sketches from the life already jotted down in correspondence, there is no inconsistency really. We may even generalize now about how the Austen novels came into print. Once all the necessary elements were present, the essentials of what material was to be used, how to use it, with what intention and through what form of treatment, and when life had presented her with the right centre of interest (Eliza's death-bed, Fanny Knight's love-affairs, her own views and emotions about marriage at a critical time in her life) she could undoubtedly work at speed under pressure, perfecting details, inventing alternative situations and speeches where she felt it necessary for getting the right effect (as she re-wrote overnight the scene of Captain Wentworth's proposal when dissatisfied with her first version of it in utterly different circumstances, having led up to this crisis slowly enough no doubt). What originally was owing to accident in denying publication to her first three novels in their early forms, brought about a method of composition which enabled her to put all her powers into everything she published. Later in the century these first-stage stories like *Lady Susan* would have been prematurely rushed to the press for periodical publication, and the intricate process by which her immature conceptions and experiments

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became works of art of great value would have been destroyed half-way. Henry wrote in his notice, 'everything came finished from her pen,' and we may see that this is true in one sense by reading her letters, which have on occasions as lively a surface as the novels and abound in happy expressions. But Henry's epigram needs interpreting if it is not to mislead. Almost everything did come out finished in the end (except a few botched jobs like Willoughby's past, Nurse Rooke and Mrs. Smith), but the whole was not put on paper in one stroke. Any one of the novels took years to reach the finished stage, and many pens must have been worn out on that novel before it came finished from the last one.

The final novel, *Mansfield Park* let us say, differs then from its earlier form or forms not simply in greater abundance of detail, richer plot and characterization and added finish of surface, as we should expect. It differs utterly in kind. The original material has not only been added to, but put to a different kind of use; the use of the carriage-incident in *Mansfield Park* is representative. In *Lady Susan* and *Mansfield Park*, as in *The Watsons* and *Emma* and no doubt in *First Impressions* and *Pride and Prejudice*, we have an illustration of the difference between a low-level success and a high-level one, between the efficient and the unique in art. As an illustration of what I mean by this different use of the same material, the exposure scenes of *All's Well that Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure* suggest themselves. The one play followed the other after a couple of years, and a comparison of the exposure scene in each which elucidates the plot and winds up the play, shows that the dramatist used exactly the same pattern in the later as in the earlier play for this purpose, with a similar pair of women, the same situation, the same perplexing and teasing way of letting out the secret in bits and baffling or checking first one party and then the other. But *All's Well* is quite uninteresting, and the exposure scene might have come from any well-made play of the kind—we only feel about it that it does all that is required of it and rounds off the comedy neatly. But in using it again for the later play the dramatist has made it the culmination of the whole work, an epitome as well as an explication. All our bewildered feelings and doubts about what the dramatist has intended by the play till then, about what to think and how and whom to judge, are resolved for us, everything is revealed with marvellous economy and every phrase becomes

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pregant (I assume the reader is in agreement with Professor Wilson Knight's interpretation of *Measure for Measure* in *The Wheel of Fire*, which alone makes sense of the play[1]). Jane Austen's method of creating works of art is not unique, it has been practised by many poets, but it has never I believe been *habitually* practised by any other great writer as a regular method of composition. But if we think of the conditions in which she of necessity wrote—the lack of privacy of her life generally and the frequent visits and changes of house, the common sitting-room, the domestic duties, the callers against whom she was warned but not protected by the creaking door, the jottings on little slips of paper that could be concealed under a blotting pad—we can see that only by such a method could she have translated the product of an intense and sustained private life into substantial works of art.

Q. D. LEAVIS.

[1] [This had been written before the discussion of *Measure for Measure* contained in the present number of *Scrutiny* proposed itself.—Ed.]

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# COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

## AFTER 'TO THE LIGHTHOUSE.'

*BETWEEN THE ACTS, by Virginia Woolf (Hogarth Press, 7/6).*

The design of making this book an occasion for reviewing Virginia Woolf's career has had to be abandoned, a war-time casualty; a stop-gap pen has to undertake this note. Yet the book can hardly be reviewed by itself. But for the name on the cover, and the mannerisms associated with that name, no one could have supposed it to be by an author of distinction or achievement. Even its extraordinary vacancy and pointlessness, the apparent absence of concern for any appearance of grasp or point, would not have seemed a case for critical analysis. Knowing it to be by Virginia Woolf, we can say that this is where her famous preoccupation with the essential, with the significant, with ' life ' has led.

Here is what she wrote in the essay on ' Modern Fiction ' in *The Common Reader*:

> ' Look within and life, it seems, is very far from being " like this." Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions—trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old; the moment of importance came not here but there; so that, if a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose, not what he must, if he could base his work upon his own feeling and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style, and perhaps not a single button sewn on as the Bond Street tailors would have it. Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this

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> unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible? '

She is describing, she says, the preoccupation of ' several young writers among whom Mr. James Joyce is the most notable ' :

> ' They attempt to come closer to life, and to preserve more sincerely and exactly what interests and moves them, even if to do so they must discard most of the conventions which are commonly observed by the novelist. Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness.'

Among the younger writers she is thinking of (in May, 1919), there is one upon whom this account throws more light than upon Joyce. In fact we, who have in front of us not only the whole of *Ulysses,* but the whole body of Joyce's work, can say that of *his* aims (though she no doubt learnt something from him) her description conveys a very inadequate and misleading notion. It has, however, an obvious application to her own subsequent work; and even by itself it might prompt us to some questioning.

To talk of the impressions the mind receives (not, we note, ' forms,' the usual verb) as atoms falling upon it might hardly seem matter for comment, in a writer who doesn't parade a psychological apparatus. But when Mrs. Woolf's insistence on this way of putting it—and she does insist—issues in, ' Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern . . .', we can't help asking whether the order in which they fall is likely to be the kind of order that a pattern is. Clearly not, unless the mind has within it a very positive and active bent of interest—so positive and active that, had she been realizing this truth, Mrs. Woolf could hardly have put things as she does. And to achieve the kind of order necessary to a good novel, the mind would have to have not only a strong positive bent of interest, but a kind of interest in the world ' out there ' that Mrs. Woolf's injunction to ' look within ' for ' life,' among the ' innumerable atoms ' of ' impressions,' hardly suggests—suggests the less when

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she comes to calling this ' life,' which it is the ' task of the novelist to convey . . . with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible,' a 'luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end.'

Mrs. Woolf's best novel, it is pretty generally agreed, is *To the Lighthouse*; to me, as to others, it is the only good one—the only one in which her talent fulfils itself in a satisfactory achievement. The substance of this novel was provided directly by life—in a more vulgar sense of the word than that given it above: we know enough about Leslie Stephen, the novelist's father, and his family to know that there is a large measure of direct transcription. We can see a clear relation between this fact and the unique success of *To the Lighthouse* among her novels. Mrs. Woolf's decision to have ' no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love-interest or catastophe in the accepted style ' was perhaps to this extent justified, that she hadn't interests rich and active enough to justify what she was rejecting; but neither, we have to conclude, had she interests adequate to the problem of supplying substitutes. By way of eliminating any unduly pejorative suggestions of ' accepted style ' we may adduce the Conrad she admired—the great artist whose essential and successful concern was indisputably with that which Mr. Bennett, ' with his magnificent apparatus for catching life,' seemed to miss—' whether we call it life or spirit, truth or reality '; the contrast brings out how little of human experience—how little of life—comes within Mrs. Woolf's scope.

The envelope enclosing her dramatized sensibilities may be ' semi-transparent '; but it seems to shut out all the ranges of experience accompanying those kinds of preoccupation, volitional and moral, with an external world which are not felt primarily as preoccupation with one's consciousness of it. The preoccupation with intimating ' significance ' in fine shades of consciousness, together with the unremitting play of visual imagery, the 'beautiful' writing and the lack of moral interest and interest in action, give the effect of something closely akin to a sophisticated aestheticism. (There is also the Aesthetic brooding wistfulness about the passage of time.)

Weaknesses of this kind (for weaknesses they are, though triumphs may be won out of them) have, we know, their fostering conditions in the relation of the artist to modern society. A sensitive

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mind whose main interests are not endorsed by the predominant interests of the world it lives in, and whose talent and professional skill seem to have no real public importance, is naturally apt to cultivate (if this is the right word) the 'bubble of the private consciousness.' Not that Mrs. Woolf hadn't her congenial and applauding social-cultural milieu. She belonged, of course, to the original Bloomsbury, the Bloomsbury of Clive Bell's *Civilisation* and Lytton Strachey's wit (some of her essays are in his cheapest manner, and one can seldom feel quite safe from the communal note). A milieu that so often reminds us of its potency in the work of as distinguished a writer as E. M. Forster must be held accountable for a great deal in the development—or failure to develop—of Virginia Woolf. The general nature of its operation may be seen in the Preface and text of *Orlando*, the work that followed *To the Lighthouse*, and after which the discouraging signs multiplied steadily to the end.

It is proper to conclude so patently un-self-sufficing a commentary by referring the reader to the fuller and very relevant criticism of Virginia Woolf that appeared in *Scrutiny* for June, 1937, and September, 1938.

F. R. LEAVIS.

## A BOOK ON RILKE

*RAINER MARIA RILKE, by E. M. Butler* (*Cambridge*, 21/-).

The main issue at stake in most Rilke-criticism is, inevitably, the vexed question of his meaning, his philosophy. And if ever there was a poet who demands scrupulous carefulness, exactitude, and honesty from his interpreters, it is Rilke. One burst of enthusiasm in the wrong place and the account is hopelessly vitiated; and one sudden revulsion occasioned by misreading or over-simplification, and nothing is left of Rilke but a fluently perverse genius *manqué*. Indubitably one cannot obtain much aesthetic pleasure from his work without having come to some sufficiently tenable conclusions about the bare bones of his philosophical theories, but the tendency of most of his critics has been to pad these bones (which are not all that difficult to locate) with the flesh and features of their own pet philosophy. The resultant corpse has little resemblance to the corpus of his poetry.

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This tendency has a certain justification, for though Rilke's philosophy (I can think of no better word) was probably not half as esoteric as it at first seems, nevertheless the mythology of its exposition—the youthfully dead, the child, the lover, the hero, the Angel—can suggest all kinds of diverse interpretations, and it is then the mischief is done. Thus a French critic can assume the presence in Rilke's poetry of theosophical beliefs, and others have managed to ' explain ' it in terms of systems ranging from disillusioned scepticism to orthodox Catholicism, with phenomenology and *Existenzphilosophie* thrown in somewhere between. And most of these interpretations can offer a show of reason; perhaps because Rilke's basic conviction (the ever-emphasized) as to the wholeness of Life-Death is not a philosophy in itself but only the foundation of most philosophies not of an altogether exotic or perverse description. There certainly is some excuse for these ubiquitous variants of over-simplification in relating Rilke's work to some worked-out, ' orthodox ' system of thought. But the only idea to which Professor Butler seeks to relate Rilke's poetry, in the first complete study of Rilke to appear in English, is the idea that he was rather a nasty man. And this is not such a worthy axe to grind.

It is easy to understand how one might come to dislike Rilke through misguidedly or (as here) unavoidably studying his early works (such as those indefensible excursions in the putrescent subject plus polished style genre, of which Professor Butler gives a pleasantly grisly account), but if this distaste is sufficiently fierce and implacable to constitute an insuperable barrier to the appreciation of the *Duino Elegies* and the *Sonnets to Orpheus*, in which the overdone elements of Rilke's early decadence are purified and integrated to form immaculately clean and superbly healthy works of genius, then one should refrain from writing at length on this poet. It is not necessary to pick out any minor instances of Professor Butler's consistently uncharitable attitude to poor Rilke: the tone of the book throughout suggests that she regarded Rilke with grave suspicion before she had read his poetry, heartily disliked him when she had done so, and quite detested the man when she came to write about him.

Professor Butler takes her main stand as the disciple of reason, level-headed and standing no nonsense from anybody (particularly poets). This is just and admirable when she is busily engaged in

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despatching the earlier works, the morbid and the mawkish—though, it must be remembered, Rilke himself repudiated these—but when she comes to deal with the late, and important works, the result is pitiful. What she wants, apparently, is something pleasantly lyrical, a kind of *Golden Treasury*, and she loses her temper when Rilke, instead, wickedly offers her poetry that, in her own words, ' will not let its readers merely look and listen.' I suppose we should be grateful for the honest expression of her taste in poetry.

> Nirgends, Geliebte, wird Welt sein, als innen. Unser
> Leben geht hin mit Verwandlung. Und immer geringer
> schwindet das Aussen.[1]

But, as we see, Professor Butler does not believe in the transformation of the artist. She prefers natural description to be just natural, and to her *Dinge* are simply 'things' and have none of that poignant significative life they had for Rilke.

And so she concludes by haling in Santayana's rejection of the *German transcendentalists*, which she applies without modification to Rilke (which is surely begging the question) who thus, it seems, is devastatingly exposed in all his naked uselessness. His poetry is ' like a shooting star with no guarantee for the future.' Q.E.D.

But—I should say—Rilke was engaged not so much in teutonically inflating the human ego until it burst, as in attempting to draw its attention (again and again, and in many ways) to a part of existence which it had ignored in its blustering (and terrified) efforts to squeeze every possible pleasure out of its immediate moment of life. Rilke did not foist on us a brand new universe (where we could do our shooting star act) but, rather, he endeavoured to show to us—and with what patience—what he considered the true and complete meaning of the universe we are already living in, but which we denigrate and degrade through our pettiness, our wrongful interpretation and terror of death, our superstitious fear of superstition. He wrote to von Hulewicz, his Polish translator:

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[1]Which Leishman translates:

> ' Nowhere, beloved, can world exist but within.
> Life passes in transformation. And, ever diminishing,
> vanishes what's outside.'

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'In the *Elegies,* affirmation of life *and* affirmation of death reveal themselves as one. To concede the one without the other is, as is here experienced and celebrated, a restriction that finally excludes all infinity. Death is our reverted, our unilluminated, side of life: we must try to achieve the greatest possible consciousness of our existence, which is at home in both of these unlimited provinces, which is inexhaustibly nourished out of both . . . The true form of life extends through both regions, the blood of the mightiest circulation pulses through both: there is neither a here nor a beyond, but only the great unity . . .'[2]

His great thesis was the bringing to earth of the individual:

> Eins muss er wieder können: fallen,
> geduldig in der Schwere ruhn,
> der sich vermass, den Vögeln allen
> im Fliegen es zuvortun.[3]

There is nothing much of the shooting star about this.

But Professor Butler will have nothing of this. She maintains that Rilke was afflicted with 'an ineradicable distaste for life as we know it.' Now that is very true (and very obvious) in one sense, but in the sense in which she intends it, it is very untrue. For what on earth did Rilke mean, if she is right, by crying 'Hiersein ist herrlich' ('to be here is glorious')? If he had merely voiced that sentiment in the void, then—considering the forcefulness of his *Klage,* his lamentation—Professor Butler would be quite correct;

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[2]As some critics have pointed out, we must be wary in accepting Rilke's later explanations of his work. It is quite possible that, carried away by his recognition and the frequent requests for an exposition of his meaning, he may have evolved a prose 'philosophy' which is not exactly coincident with the thought-structure of his poetry. Fritz Dehn was very right when he said that the poetry itself has an unconditional precedence over any information the poet might give about its genesis. But what I have quoted above seems to me quite unexceptionable.

[3]'There is one thing he must again grow capable of: falling, patiently resting in heaviness—he who presumed to surpass all the birds in flying.' (*Stunden-Buch*).

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but there is a considerable bulk of his poetry to back up that affirmation, there is his *Rühmung,* his magnificat. It was only ' dummy-life,' ' pseudo-things,' for which he had an ineradicable distaste, and that is hardly grounds for complaint.[4] Here is an apposite quotation from a letter of his:

> ' I know that one is only justified in making such full use of the strings of lamentation if one has resolved to play on them, by means of them, later, the whole of that triumphant jubilation that swells up behind everything hard and painful and endured, and without which voices are incomplete.'

In his last *Elegy,* the source of joy *is* discovered, and

> Bei den Menschen
> ist sie ein tragender Strom.
>
> (' Among men it is a carrying stream.')

I would not presume to confront Professor Butler with any exegesis of my own, but fortunately she can be refuted purely by reference to the text of the *Duino Elegies.* Consider the *Fifth Elegy* (*Les Saltimbanques*). If Rilke's thought were as ' transcendental ' as Professor Butler makes out—if, that is to say, Rilke's attitude to, and use of, the acrobats as symbols were misted, mysterious, esoteric, ultramundane—then it is not likely that his verse would be as superbly concrete, sinuous, and vividly present as it is. The movement—poetry, symbolism, meaning—is as smooth, subtle, and unhesitant as the acrobats' performance. It is, I think, one of the finest, most convincing metaphysical-physical identifications that poetry of any time can provide:

> Wer aber *sind* sie, sag mir, die Fahrenden, diese ein wenig
> Flüchtigern noch als wir selbst, die dringend von früh an

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[4] ' Now there come crowding over from America empty, indifferent things, pseudo-things, dummy-life . . . A house, in the American understanding, an American apple or vine, has nothing in common with the house, the fruit, the grape into which the hope and meditation of our forefathers had entered . . . The animated, experienced things that share our lives are coming to an end and cannot be replaced. We are perhaps the last to have still known such things.' (Letter to von Hulewicz).

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wringt ein wem—wem zuliebe
niemals zufriedener Wille? Sondern er wringt sie,
biegt sie, schlingt sie und schwingt sie,
wirft sie und fängt sie zurück; wie aus geölter
glatterer Luft kommen sie nieder
auf dem verzehrten, von ihrem ewigen
Aufsprung dünneren Teppich, diesem verlorenen
Teppich im Weltall.
Aufgelegt wie ein Pflaster, als hätte der Vorstadt—
Himmel der Erde dort wehegetan . . .[5]

Besides the irrelevance of her philosophical reflections, there is also a paucity of simple literary criticism in the book. But it has its virtues: Professor Butler has evidently worked very hard and has accumulated material of considerable biographical interest. However, those who desire a degree of enlightenment as to Rilke's main tenets in order to enjoy his poetry, will find J. B. Leishman's introduction and commentary to his translations of the *Duino Elegies*[6] very much more useful.

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[5]The beginning of the *Fifth Elegy*, which Leishman translates thus:

But tell me, who *are* they, these acrobats, even a little
more fleeting than we ourselves—so urgently, even since childhood,
wrung by an (oh, for the sake of whom?)
never-contented will? That keeps on wringing them,
bending them, slinging them, swinging them,
throwing them and catching them back: as though from an oily,
smoother air, they come down on the threadbare
carpet, thinned by their everlasting
upspringing, this carpet forlornly
lost in the cosmos.
Laid on there like a plaster, as though the suburban
sky had injured the earth.

[6]*Duino Elegies: The German text, with an English translation and commentary* by J. B. Leishman and Stephen Spender (Hogarth Press, 7/6).

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Professor Butler, with that honesty we have noted before, presents us with the key to the curious mystery of her book when, in her introduction, she admits that Rilke is ' still a mystery to me, and one which I shall never fathom.' Alas that such honesty should be, in practice, so conceited.

D. J. ENRIGHT.

## DICKENS AS JOURNALIST

*THE DICKENS WORLD, by Humphry House* (*O.U.P.*, 10/6).

To say that this book has nothing much to do with literary criticism is to pay the author a well-deserved compliment. His intention being ' to show in a broad and general way the connection between what Dickens wrote and the times in which he wrote it,' he deliberately treats Dickens ' as if he were a journalist more than a creative artist ' and therefore takes his material as much from *Household Words* and *All The Year Round* as from the novels. Writing a piece of social history, he has wisely refrained from passing any literary judgments. But this is to put the praise grudgingly. Mr. House is obviously aware that the separation between Dickens as journalist and Dickens as novelist is necessary for reasons other than those of convenience. The social historian can give the literary critic plenty of material to work on, to reinforce that study of the actual words which is the latter's particular province, without attempting to draw literary conclusions himself. Nowhere, in this scholarly and unpretentious book, does the author trespass over the bounds he has set himself, and, considering the frequent temptation he must have had to do so, we can be grateful for his good taste.

What are the merits of the book regarded purely as social history I am not qualified to judge, but in spite of, or because of, its unpretentious tone, it brings home several startling points to one who possesses merely a nodding acquaintance with the period in question. The most interesting, and, I should imagine, the most original section deals with the actual relevance of Dickens's striving for social reform. Here Mr. House's painstaking collection of evidence has led him to some unhackneyed conclusions, whereas similar arrays of documentation under other headings (the section on Religion, for example) only amplify criticism by Santayana,

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O'Faolain, etc.

Mr. House starts his argument by considering Dickens's ' continued habit of drawing on his own past,' the habit which caused him, for instance, to set the story of *Little Dorrit* in the 1820s, so that he could use his own personal recollections of the Marshalsea prison, but grafting on to this story of ' thirty years ago ' such contemporary social satire as that of the Circumlocution Office and the Merdle finance, both prompted by happenings of the '40s. ' Whatever the imaginary date of the plot, the material most likely to be contemporary with the time of writing, and most topical to it, is the " Reformism " and the more deliberate social satire.'

But most of the ' deliberate social satire ' in Dickens is not topical at all. This is Mr. House's main argument, which he develops with more than enough evidence to convince. He comes to the conclusion that Dickens could never have gained his tremendous and immediate hold on public opinion had he been more of a pioneer. ' He seemed topical to thousands: he was not too topical for them to see the point, nor too advanced to have the public conscience on his side . . . He shared a great deal of common experience with his public, so that it could gratefully and proudly say " How true! "; he so exploited his knowledge that the public recognized its master in knowing . . . and caught exactly the tone which clarified and reinforced the public's sense of right and wrong, and flattered its moral feelings.'

So, if Mr. House's data are sufficient and the conclusions he draws from them just, the near-Marxian figure of Dickens created by Mr. T. A. Jackson becomes most shadowy. But I would prefer not to discuss the issue, correct as I suspect Mr. House's argument to be, because a more strictly literary question obtrudes itself. Letting the problem of Dickens's topicality slide for the moment, I am tempted to put the question: does the whole concern of Dickens with contemporary reform matter very much?

This is not to commit the trespass we praised Mr. House for avoiding. We put forward simply the general idea that, out of the mass of writing about Dickens published (say) since the beginning of this century, a disproportionately large amount has been devoted to his ' interest in social reform.' Most critics have had the good taste to make a strictly historical approach, which is essential if the conclusions to be drawn are social ones. But few critics, if any,

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have considered this aspect of Dickens's work from the point of view of Dickens as a *novelist,* taking his success therein to be part of his artistic achievement.

If we make this approach, then any question of his topicality becomes irrelevant. An appreciation of Dickens which limits itself to the aptitude of his writing to the immediate social background is giving us no more of the real Dickens than we should get of Shakespeare if we took the satire of Falstaff to apply only to the reign of Henry IV or of Swift if we took the last book of *Gulliver* to refer simply to the politicians of Queen Anne. When Fielding, in *Joseph Andrews,* adds to the chivalrous behaviour of the postillion (who has lent the naked hero his coat) the celebrated parenthesis: ' A lad that hath since been transported for robbing a hen-roost,' it is surely the fine irony that interests us rather than the fact that Fielding condemned such travesties of justice. It is much the same with Dickens. *Oliver Twist* has a definite reference to workhouse reform, and how close this reference is a comparison of certain passages with chapters of Mr. and Mrs. Hammond's *Age of the Chartists* brings out very strikingly, and yet what is the importance of Mr. Bumble's off-handed mention of ' that reduced tradesman, who died in a doorway at midnight ' but, once again, the nicely-shaded irony (Sowerberry having just admired the Good Samaritan on Bumble's parochial seal), the irony of a fundamental theme of literature, the insolence of office.'

One would like, then, to see rather more interest in Dickens as a novelist. Such a desire implies, of course, no criticism of such work as Mr. House's; but it would be a refreshing change to find a background to Dickens ' which was concerned chiefly with the literature and language of the time. It is, after all, the *language* of Dickens which is the most remarkable thing about him; both his success in comedy and his usual failure in tragedy depend primarily on this. And the material is large enough, the many questions of style intriguing; why, to take one hurried example out of scores, should Dickens (in the Introduction to *Little Dorrit*) have been unable to speak simply of ' a small boy carrying a baby ' but have found it necessary to write ' the smallest boy I ever conversed with, carrying the largest baby I ever saw '? Such ' poor matters point to rich ends.' There is always room for social history of the quality of *The Dickens World,* but I would like to come across a book con-

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cerned more with the inimitability of Boz than with the credentials of the Uncommercial Traveller.

R. C. CHURCHILL.

*THE STARLIT DOME, by G. Wilson Knight* (*O.U.P.*, 16/-).

This book contains essays on Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats and Shelley; and though unlikely to enlighten readers of those somewhat ill-sorted poets, is a useful aid to a clinical study of the decay of its author's critical integrity—should such a study be thought worth undertaking.

Mr. Knight sets forth his aims in these terms:

> ' Poetry of any worth is a rounded solidity which drops shadows only on the flat surfaces of philosophical statement. Concretely it bodies forth symbols of which our ghostly concepts of " life," " death," " time," " eternity," " immortality " are only very pallid analogies. They are none the less necessary, if we are to enchain our normal thinking to the creations of great literature, and I next translate the domed symbolism of *Khubla Khan* into such shadow terms corresponding to the original in somewhat the same way as the science of Christian theology corresponds, or should correspond, to the New Testament.'

The first part of this paragraph is a very fair example of the cloudy imprecision of Mr. Knight's prose. One wonders in what way a concept, however ghostly, can be an analogy of a symbol The second part contains in one word the essence of Mr. Knight's method: he does not, you note, explain, interpret, or assess—he ' translates.' If the poets he writes about could read him they might well, remembering Bottom, exclaim ' Bless me! I am translated,' for they could see upon their own body poetic, the features, not of course, of an ass, but of Mr. Wilson Knight himself.

Here are a few more examples of his trend of thought, and of the kind of judgment to which he now commits himself.

Of Wordsworth, in *Resolution and Independence*: ' His simple heroic persons, he takes care to tell you, are not literary poets; and neither in his main direction, is he. He is rather a lonely prophet of the eternal.' The implication that what Wordsworth is saying is different from, and more important than, literature is characteristic: and after reading a good deal in this vein one is left with a strong

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suspicion that one is meant to feel that the author, also, is among the prophets.

Of the *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality* he says 'This is probably Wordsworth's most finally satisfying human work,' and he dismisses Coleridge's sensible strictures on the lines about the child—'Thou best philosopher' etc.—with these words: 'I cannot here defend Wordsworth in detail, though it would be very easy to do so. It is surely unnecessary, and, if necessary, likely to be futile. *Once we rise to the plane on which the poet addresses us* [italics mine] each phrase that Coleridge criticizes becomes of apocalyptic power.'

As a climax to his approving comment on 'the vividly characterized clergyman of "resolute virtue" in *The Excursion*,'

> A man of hope and forward looking mind
> Even to the last,

he exclaims 'He is Browningesque!'

Of the *Miscellaneous Sonnets* he writes thus: 'Nature feeling is, of course, constant, and usually bright and glittering. The moon and Venus are vividly addressed, birds are idyllic, wet drops glitter, and the sea is a symbol of peace. Pagan mythology assists frequently, and faery impressions and even faery personifications are allowed. Sleep is honoured, as in Shelley and Keats.'

And here is a final, crowning sample of solemn absurdity, from his comments on *Khubla Khan*. 'Its very names are so lettered as to suggest first and last things: Xanadu, Khubla Khan, Alph, Abyssinian, Abora. "A" is emphatic; Xanadu, which starts the poem, is enclosed in letters that might well be called eschatological; while Khubla Khan himself sits alphabetically central with his alliterating "K's".'

These are fair samples of the sort of writing and thinking that make up this book: there is no point in quoting further, and no point in further comment—for the author, and, one must assume, the reader to whom this kind of approach is sympathetic, have their answer ready. Those who don't agree, haven't risen to the 'plane on which the poet addresses them'; they are insensible to the 'apocalyptic power.'

It is, I think, obvious, that Mr. Wilson Knight is no longer primarily interested in literature. The text no longer serves 'o

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discipline the exuberance of his ' translations '; and the method which served him so well in some of the early essays on Shakespeare has now become merely a means of propagating his own private, nebulous, pseudo-religion. The works of the poets are no longer for him domes beneath which he may in humility worship: they are rather soap-boxes from the top of which he bawls the values of his own rather dubious wares.

T. R. BARNES.

## TIPPETTAN DISCOVERY

*FANTASY SONATA for piano, by Michael Tippett (played by Phyllis Sellick, Decca-Rimington Van Wyck private recording).*

Contemporary English music has suffered more than most from the nineteenth-century obsession with the sublime whereby seriousness in musical speech was equated with symphonic solemnity. Of late several young English composers have attempted to override this obsession, but their efforts have for the most part proved abortive either because (as in the case of Benjamin Britten) of the ambiguous sincerity of facetiousness, or else because (as in the case of several disciples of the Nadia Boulanger school) of a simple deficiency of talent.

It is therefore a pleasure to be able to announce that English music has in Michael Tippett a composer whose music is as airy, gracious and unteutonic as could be, and yet is unmistakably the expression of a sensibility of real distinction. It follows more or less inevitably that although one of the chief virtues of his music is its lack of pretension, this music is not nearly such a small thing as superficially it looks.

Mr. Tippett's idiom, as revealed in the *Fantasy Sonata*, is lucidly diatonic and homophonic with occasional adventures into polytonality and into agile two-part imitative writing. The kind of extension and ellipsis of diatonic tonalities that he sometimes employs, and the brusque and bouncy nature of his quicker rhythms, might be comparable with the technique of Hindemith were not Tippett's sensibility so sparkling and unteutonic: the glitter of his keyboard writing might suggest a comparison with Poulenc and Françaix did not Mr. Tippett's sparkle serve so much deeper a musical purpose. Actually the only comparison with another composer that seems to me pertinent is that with Busoni.

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The extraordinarily sunny toccata-like character of the pianism is similar to that of Busoni in his witty Italian vein; here too we find gleaming arpeggios decorating often with polytonal implications simple, dance-like, diatonic themes, rapid scale passages used to create whirling arabesques of sound around some of the more lyrical passages of the line, and even, in the slow movement, something comparable with the amazing glassy, glinting effects that Busoni achieves by polytonal treatment of his wavering chromatic figuration.

If I compare Tippett's music with Busoni's it is only, however, in order to try to give some idea of its idiom to readers who have probably (like myself until the arrival of these records) never heard a note of it: I do not think Tippett has been influenced by Busoni except in so far as the Italian may have helped to mould his piano technique. Mr. Tippett's sensibility is witty and Italian rather than German (he himself suggests the influence of Scarlatti though I can see no similarity except in the extreme clarity of the keyboard writing); but, through being airy and delicate he does not therefore cease to be English (or anyway Cornish), and the contour of his phrases, for all his music's continental sophistication, is yet reconcilable with the natural melody forms of the English musical language. For instance, although the emotional temper of the slow movement is in its cool unsentimentality poles apart from the productions of the English folky school, its tenderly intertwining lines so breathe the atmosphere of the modal figures of British folk-song that several of the phrases are startlingly, though of course unconsciously, suggestive of the beautiful Scottish tune *Ca' the yowes*.

But traditional though Mr. Tippett's art fundamentally is, it is in the exquisite *freshness* of the lyrical phrases that his distinction most consists. The first movement is a series of variations on a delicious pastoral theme of a diatonic innocence and a rhythmical suavity rather like a French nursery song, but with some characteristic metrical surprises. Though the lyrical material, with its gently coaxing repeated notes, is brief it is very subtle, as is indicated by the unexpected emotional range of the variations each of which seems to start as an experiment in pianistic sonority. (It is here that the Busoni-like devices are in evidence; particularly lovely is the slowish one with rapid scale arabesques and some

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cunning placing of crystalline sevenths in the treble registers). But the peak of the work lies is the slow movement—a restrained meditation in which lyrical phrases of the most fragile pathos weave a poignantly tranquil polyphony, intermittently flowing into a two-part polytonal dialogue. Manifestly the creation of an English sensibility, this movement has a caressing lyrical suavity which is all too rare in contemporary music while at the same time the cat-footed delicacy of the writing and the precise enunciation of the polytonal texture imbue the music with a silvery intensity which is the more disturbing for being apparently impersonal. It is not, of course, with its intentional avoidance of large-scale evolution and its restricted dynamic range, music of great pretensions: but in listening to it one is continually aware of unsuspected depths beneath the unruffled surface.

The third movement is a rhythmically and decoratively animated return to the mood of the theme of the variations—a wayward rustic innocence in the nursery-like theme and a deliberately artificial elegance in the decorative and percussive detail. The final *rondo giocoso* has a saucy tune distinctly negroid in feeling, and also tactfully exploits the rhythmic and harmonic clichés of jazz. That Mr. Tippett should be able to assimilate these dangerous elements so completely into his sensibility is testimony to that sensibility's integrity; whereas the young Parisian composers of the nineteen-twenties who cashed in on jazz did so in a facetious or parodistic vein, Mr. Tippett's oblique references to the idiom produce no stylistic incongruity and in no way impair or vulgarize the characteristic fragility of his own musical speech, partly because melodically he reconciles the (rhythmic-pentatonic) naïveté of the negro with his own charming ingenuousness of spirit, partly because of a nonchalant understatement and ellipsis in the rhythm (for instance in the theme's final cadence), and partly because of the delicately stylized glitter of the arpeggio filigree-work. Busoni uses a similar decorative technique, combining rusticity with sophistication, in his *Indian Sketchbook*, though his treatment of his ' primitive ' material is not witty either in effect or intention.

Mr. Tippett's music as a whole exhibits a characteristic seldom found in musical idioms in that wit may be said to reside in the nature of his lyrical phrases themselves and not merely in the harmonic and rhythmic treatment to which the phrases are subjected,

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though the treatment is brilliant enough (*cf.* for instance the tactfully comic use, in the finale, of the higher chromatic discord clichés of the jazz idiom). The lyric freshness of the themes and the meticulous clarity of the texture give to the music a purity of feeling peculiarly spring-like and virginal, and if the *Fantasy Sonata* has a failing, it is only that the slow movement touches a pathos and spirituality of utterance which seems not quite apposite in the context. This is a failing, however, to be energetically encouraged: and I will hazard the opinion that this brief movement contains more musical substance than most of the works of Britten and other much publicized composers rolled into one, and that the man who could create it should play an important part in the future destiny of English music.

I cannot imagine this work being played with greater brilliance and poetry than by Phyllis Sellick, one of the most gifted of our younger pianists; and the recording is superlatively fine. These are records to be bought, as much for their achievement as for their indubitable promise. In conclusion I might add that Michael Tippett was born in 1905 and that the *Fantasy Sonata* was written in 1938. His other works include a symphony, a string quartet, a choral work to words of Blake, and a concerto for double string orchestra: I have heard none of these nor, as far as I am aware, is any of them published.

W. H. MELLERS.

## DVORAK CENTENARY RECORDS

*DVORAK: Quintet in E flat for piano and strings (played by the Silverman Quartet and Margaret Good) Decca. Terzetto for strings (played by the Grinke trio) Decca.*

These two offshoots of the Dvorak centenary celebrations are both energetically to be recommended. Neither work contains any music of that tragic strenuousness which places Dvorak's greatest creation, the D minor Symphony, among the supreme achievements of the nineteenth century, but they are both imbued with that glowing, radiant, sun-drenched luminosity—technically to be equated with the masterly handling of instrumental resource and the 'placing' of diatonic sonorities—which characterizes all Dvorak's most representative music. The exquisite trio writing at

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the end of the slow movement of the *Terzetto*, and the lingering, murmurous rustling that concludes the slow movement of the quintet, are particularly happy instances; and throughout, Dvorak's management of the difficult combination of piano with strings—using the piano to create by spread chord formations mostly in the instrument's top registers a rich gleaming sonority which reinforces the enunciation of the themes—is as lovely and successful an achievement in tonal balance as that of the Brahms trio reviewed last quarter.

But of course loveliness of tonal colour and ingenuity of balance have no meaning apart from the material on which the ingenuity is expended, and if Dvorak is an unequal composer who sometimes makes a little go a long way, there is no doubt about the energy of the lyrical impulse in these works. The lyricism of the *Terzetto*—a ripe synthesis of ' middle ' Beethoven with Schubert in the unique Dvorak crucible—is beautiful if unexciting: but the quintet is altogether a magnificent work, full of a passionate intensity that carries off themes (like the second one of the slow movement) of a simplicity that would be banal if it were not something that can only be called inspired. The dark violence of the development of the first movement, with its percussive piano writing, and of the agitato section of the slow movement, is astonishing after the elegant vivacity and serene amiability of the opening themes: while equally astonishing, in an inverse fashion, is the tender modulation that leads into the first movement's recapitulation. In such passages lyrical evolution and harmonic drama are so consummately reconciled that we hardly know whether to say that the fluid modulations give lyrical movement to the pervasively homophonic technique or that the lyricism itself dictates the dramatic architecture.

The last movement is particularly remarkable in that it sums up a tendency implicit in the whole work—a vein of infectious *urbanity* in the agile melodies and modulations, the bouncy rhythms, the glittering piano writing, which counteracts the usual ' rustic ' account of this composer and which, being at once witty and serious, is closer to some French music of the nineteenth century (for instance Chabrier) than to anything in the Teutonic tradition. The performance (particularly the pianist's) is brilliant and the recording one of the finest I have heard of the combination of strings with piano.

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# CORNISH MICROCOSM

*TUDOR CORNWALL, by A. L. Rowse (Cape, 18/-).*

This book will not only give pleasure to those who study past social and economic conditions, but it will also afford special interest to any reader who cares about civilization, its past and future.

Mr. Rowse has given twelve years' research to the study of his native Duchy for a period of just over a hundred years (from the accession of Henry VII to Elizabeth's death), and has managed to reduce the heavy hoards of accumulated learning to a readable book: no mean feat. The timorous, it is true, will feel that most of the formidable ecclesiastical statistics, for example, should have been banished to footnotes or appendices, but the stouter-hearted may retort that Mr. Rowse has the right after so many years' toil to flaunt a little of his learning, since in general he wears it with such easy grace. With this small caveat, it suffices to say that Mr. Rowse presents the facts in as disinterested and objective a way as possible; that he has no easily discernible religious, economic or political prejudices, and consequently leaves the reader as free as possible to draw his own conclusions and in particular to meditate upon the moving spectacle of his dissection of a small society in the throes of disintegration: the ancient celtic, mediæval structure crumbling before the onslaughts of the new 'reformed' capitalist spirit; to assess the infinite variety of motives and forces that led to the catastrophe, and finally to balance as fairly as he can the profit and loss. In studying the part we gain some conception of what happened to the whole country in that dynamic century when civilization as we know it to-day was born.

As always, the loss was tragic, violent, and irreplaceable. The Celtic Cornish language disappeared, and with it much of the mediæval structure of society in country and town; the Catholic religion with its many small Cornish monasteries, its vast spiritual armoury of belief and immemorial traditions linking up St. Tudy and St. Veep and the galaxy of Celtic saints, the miracle plays of St. Meriasek of Camborne and Vannes, with the priests and men who died in the Cornish Rebellion rather than accept the Edwardian English Prayer Book: it is not merely fanciful to think that something valuable died in the Cornish heritage then, or rather was

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brutally murdered, like the vicar of St. Thomas, Exeter, who after the rebellion was hanged in chains at the top of his church tower in all his mass vestments, having (as one reformist chronicler put it) ' a holy water bucket, a sprinkler, a sacring bell, a pair of beads and such other like papish trash hanged about him.' The priest suffered his death very patiently and with great courage, nor did he confess that he had been wrong in fighting for what he believed. Such was the toll that the new civilization exacted from the old.

Whereas what Cornwall lost was something as intangible and baffling as the mists of Tintagel, what was gained was as handsomely solid as Cotehele, Port Eliot, and all the other country houses the rising Protestant gentry built out of the proceeds of monastic spoils, enclosures, and judicious investments in tin-mines and tithes, Cornwell gained all that the enforced unity with England could give: the English Prayer Book , a share in the new, more efficient capitalist exploitation of mines and shipping, much greater prosperity and public security, and finally a glorious part in the defeat of the Great Armada. These gains were real and no doubt helped the general growth of enlightenment and education; but who can pretend to weigh the merits of greater comforts and amenities against the loss of comparative economic security and independence that accompanied it? Were the lives and merits of the house of Godolphin sufficient to outweigh the tragedy of some thousand Cornish tin-miners who laboured for them under appalling conditions for generations and were, as Lord Burleigh said, ' the roughest and most mutinous men in England? ' ' A new wealth and prosperity there was, but much of it was diverted to private and voracious channels.'

Such is the tale of the profit and the loss. That the ' folk ' or peasants suffered at the expense of the gentry is undeniable; whether the mediæval culture was, or is, more valuable to the peasants than the justly much praised civilization of Elizabethan times is very disputable. It is pleasant to consider the lives of the Carews and the Carnsews, their devotion to books and antiquity, to angling and bowls, to friendship and company; their joy in planting pear-trees and sending the boys to Oxford, and in all sorts of curious knowledge. But it is far from pleasant to think of their less fortunate contemporaries, such as Francis Tregian, who, because he kept to his family's ancestral religion, spent the greater part of his life in

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prison, at one time in the Fleet among ' bankrupts, cozenners and forgerers '; or such as Father John Cornelius who was hounded and informed against until he was martyred with the ghastly rites of hanging, drawing and quartering. And it is bitter indeed to think of the simple Cornishmen who drew up a Manifesto in the Prayer Book Rebellion asking not only for their Cornish language and their old Church (' And so we Cornishmen—whereof certain of us understand no English—utterly refuse this new English. And we will not receive the new Service because it is but like a Christmas game ') but also for greater equality between rich and poor (' We will that no gentleman shall have any more servants than one to wait upon him, except he may dispend one hundred marks' land, and for every hundred marks we think it reasonable he should have a man '): for Archbishop Cranmer, no doubt piqued at their rude references to his Prayer Book, asked them severely ' will you have the subjects to govern their king, the villains to rule the gentlemen, and the servants their masters? If men will suffer this, God will not . . .' etc., etc., and these Cornish rebels, who spared the prisoners they took, were in return mowed down by foreign mercenaries, paid by merchants of Exeter who pledged their credit to raise the necessary money.

A parable of the whole situation may perhaps be found in the case of a composer whose name is scarcely less lovely than his music —Giles Farnaby. For the handful of virginal pieces and madrigals of this composer seem to breathe a nostalgic poetry, folk-lore and superstition that, springing from his Cornish ancestry, is almost mediæval in origin. He called himself ' a sely sparrow who presumeth to Chirpe in presence of the melodious Nightingale ' and seems isolated among the Elizabethan composers in his music as he was, so far as we can tell from the scanty evidence, in his life. Perhaps the consciousness that he belonged spiritually to a past age was the reason why he wrote so little: on the other hand if he had in fact belonged to the old celtic order, instead of living in London in contact with the more sophisticated Tudor civilization and musical idiom, he probably would not have expressed himself at all. If the new age contained the seeds of disintegration, it offered great immediate riches and the gift of artistic speech which was more than just consciousness of race.

Such disparities are the stuff of real historical thinking and

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training, and I think most school libraries would be well advised to have this book for sixth-form use and study, along with any others that might well be produced in future on other parts of England in this and other no less important epochs—for instance the eighteenth century. The study of local history often awakens more interest in young people's minds than the dim political doings of Westminster, and rightly so: if well-written, local histories could illustrate in their microcosm most of the great movements and tendencies of history in general, and added to this yield much *concrete* evidence of the continuity of life, customs and tradition linking us still with our seemingly remote Tudor, or any other, forbears. 'Only,' as Mr. Rowse says, 'it demands the exercise of a rare faculty, to open our eyes to what is there for all to see—that of historical imagination. That is to say, the imagination applied to the world as we see it, and limited in its working by the evidence we have; the acceptance of that limitation is what characterizes history as opposed to other forms of art. But it is rare for people to see what commonly lies around them and what they have taken for granted all their days.' To implant this historical imagination—this awareness of the continuity of past and present—though it can no longer spring naturally from the mind and senses as in mediæval times but must of necessity come from books, is nonetheless perhaps the most essential function of education to-day.

It remains to add that *Tudor Cornwall* is a remarkable piece of war-time book-production; that it is beautifully printed on excellent paper and contains some magnificent photographs and maps.

VERA MELLERS.

## SCIENCE AND VALUES

*KNOWLEDGE FOR WHAT?, by R. S. Lynd (Oxford University Press, 11/-).*

*THE SCIENTIFIC ATTITUDE, by C. H. Waddington (Pelican Books, 6d.).*

In weighing up the merits of certain books (less technical books, on the whole) it is not always easy to maintain clearly one's own attitude whilst criticising particular tendencies or the general background from which the books were written. The result may be too

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often ' critical ' in the loose sense of the word—a largely negative approach in which the necessary alternatives may be either presumed (as known to the reader) or dealt with too briefly. The recent production by a number of scientists of books with a predominantly ' social ' background provides cases in point—the writings of Hogben, Levy, Huxley, Bernal and Haldane come immediately to mind. With their new concern for the place of science in society, they provide much that one can approve, welcome and recommend. It is less easy to make clear the alternatives when one is in disagreement—particularly when this concerns not so much positive features in their work as the omission of important sides of life of which they may seem to have been unaware. Two books have appeared in the last two years in which there is a more extensive awareness than usual of just these sides of life. They are *Knowledge for What?*, by R. S. Lynd (1939) and a new ' Pelican,' *The Scientific Attitude*, by C. H. Waddington. Both books are concerned with the use of science in planning the future of society, as have been many before them, but both are also concerned with the aims of society—the direction in which it is going. They are moreover, concerned with the reasons for adopting that direction—with the standards whereby it can be assessed: ultimately, with those values (which should be common to scientists and other human beings) which alone can justify the adoption by other people of the authoritative pronouncements of experts. As well as being knowledgeable about means, they are concerned with the ends to which those means shall be applied and with the justification for people of those ends. In these matters they differ in various degrees from many other writers on science and society. It is felt that they provide useful examples of some of the criteria which may be used in judging between the ' High Priests ' of Science.

Dr. Lynd surveys the contemporary (pre-1939) American society with an ability which we should expect of the co-author of *Middletown* and *Middletown Revisited*. He concludes (and this applies not only to America) ' we are cumulating our disabilities and the resulting strains incident to daily living at a rate faster than social legislation, education, and all the agencies for " reform " are managing to harness our new knowledge in the reduction of these disabilities. We are becoming culturally illiterate

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faster than all these agencies are managing to make us literate in the use of the potentialities of the culture.' Science is ' creating vast popular awarenesses of new problems as it seeks to discover how to make the hitherto unpreventable preventable.' Moreover all the jumbled details of life are parts of a whole and science is itself but a part of this whole—this culture. (The interrelationship involved here may be seen more clearly when the term ' personality *and* culture ' is replaced by ' personality *in* culture ': just as in the biological field some would now substitute ' organism *in* environment ' for ' organism *and* environment.') This viewpoint disposes clearly of the ambiguous suggestion that science must be ' neutral.' Two points are confused here: scientists should be as disinterested as possible in their approach to a problem, but they are (or society will be) clearly interested in which problems they do approach, and they should, as people, be interested in the uses to which their results are put. ' For the one sure fact in the present confusions of our culture is that the issues will be confronted by some means of control in some fashion. If social science is timid, it may have to endure the eclipse German science is now experiencing.'

On such grounds he bases his conception of the responsibility of the social scientist. The question is asked ' But what do people *want*? How do they *crave* to live?' ' What would have to be done, in what ways and in what sequence, in order to change the present so as to achieve it?' ' The variables in the social scientist's equation must include not only the given set of structured institutions, but also *what the present human carriers of those institutions are groping to become.*' His significant factors are ' the values of human beings living together in the pursuit of their deeper and more persistent purposes.' As examples, among others, he postulates that ' human personality craves the sense of growth, of realization of personal powers ' and suffers when frustrated. It ' craves physical and psychological security.' Whilst it needs to express its capacities through rivalry *on its own terms,* it also craves for ' human mutuality, the sharing of purposes, feeling, and action with others.' There should be ' coherence in the direction and meaning of the behaviour to which it entrusts itself.' At more subtle levels ' novelists, artists and poets provide valid insights into our culture that go beyond the cautious generalizations of social science and open up significant hypotheses for study.' Here ' social science has the most

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sensitive index to the qualitative human adequacy of operation of our . . . institutions.'

When he then proceeds to formulate a series of problems with hypotheses for social testing (which basically involve planning, control and direction) we may, I feel, consider these the more confidently in view of the attitudes which he has outlined or implied (and some of which I have tried to illustrate by quotation, however inadequately). Here, I should like to maintain, is a human understanding which was not to be discerned for example in Professor Bernal's programme (*The Social Function of Science*—reviewed in *Scrutiny*, June, 1939). It is illustrated further in his actual statement of some of the proposals, as for example: ' If major changes are required in order to cope with present problems in our culture, it is impossible to rely primarily on popular education to effect such changes.' One cannot, as he says, get an operation performed by teaching people about appendicitis. Public education permits all too freely that other agencies shall ' instil whatever habits they find convenient ': it touches only part of the total experience of living. A responsibility rests on the shoulders of social science ' working with the humanities and the arts ' to discover what changes are needed and how to achieve them: if they cannot do this ' then education will occur at the hands of other less creditable agencies.'

Further: ' Culture, if it is to be creative in the personalities of those who live it, needs to discover and to build prominently into its structure a core of richly evocative common purposes which have meaning in terms of the deep personality needs of the great mass of the people.' ' It is possible to build a culture that in all its institutions will play down the need for and the possibility of war.' ' Science needs to discover ways to knit these loose population masses (modern cities) into living communities of interest.'

These hints of humanity, I suggest, are all too seldom to be found in scientific writing (or near-scientific, if one thinks also of Wellsian programmes). Yet they also provide criteria of judgment. As an individual who happens to be a scientist I can view Dr. Lynd's ' new world ' more hopefully than usual. It is relevant to mention also that his share in the *Middletown* survey provides many other examples of criteria: to have read that should certainly have predisposed us to listen respectfully to the suggestions of either of the Lynds and here one may turn for a while to Dr. Waddington's

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book which, I think one can say fairly, must have been considerably influenced by *Middletown* and *Knowledge for What?* It also provides a number of positive criteria and amongst these its list of references is suggestive. In addition to the two just mentioned it also includes the following writers: Margaret Mead, Picasso, T. S. Eliot, Paul Nash, Auden, Empson, Whitehead, Lewis Mumford, Engels and Rilke. Few recent scientists have had such a catholic yet perceptive conception of the interrelationships between their work and that of other people, and this conception in itself may be considered to be a useful pointer in judging the merits of the writer's views. The book is at once shorter than Dr. Lynd's but more extensive in scope, since Dr. Waddington adopts the more general attitude of a scientist who happens to be a biologist. ' Each person . . . should discuss his aims and objects from his own particular point of view, in relation to the field of activity in which he works and which he knows best . . . These prejudices, if they are to have any value, must be derived from a man's own thought about his own life and work, on which he is competent to form a judgment.'

He also surveys the present social, political and economic conditions (in the light of the events of two more years) and, in turn, states a case for the greater use of science (as the study of ' how things work as causal systems ') and the planning which science would make possible. Many of his ideas here show the influence of Professor Bernal's valuable survey of the technical possibilities of scientific organization, but they are directed and integrated by a more human attitude. ' It would be more sensible if people who find that they have outgrown the ways of life which society has tried to force on them, decided first of all to discover what sort of people they wished to be, and then worked out what sort of society would allow them to be like that.' 'The people who, above all others, are interested in charting the development of human possibilities are the writers and artists . . . The state of technical knowledge, and the balance of social forces, gives man his opportunity. It is up to him to make the best of it; and in this endeavour it is the writers and artists, the scientists and architects who act as scouting parties to explore the terrain in front of the main body of advance. It is from present-day culture that we can learn what sort of being modern man should be, and it is only when we know this that we

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can decide what political and economical system we must try to create.' Such a plea for the co-operation of two aspects of culture is rare enough but none the less important. ' Nowadays it would be only slightly unfair to take as typical of the relations between science and the arts the reviews of the Royal Academy which appear each year in *Nature* . . . very meticulously, the reviewer notes whether the geology of the landscapes, and the anatomy of the young ladies, is sufficiently textbook.' Yet there are some signs of a new approach between the two. Without necessarily approving the particular results, he sees in the experiments of cubism and surrealism an, often unconscious, use of scientific method. Science, for him, is essentially analytical. ' The associations and prejudices which had clustered round each item of experience, and were smothering them as ivy smothers a tree, were derived from the old world which at the end of the last war was already tottering under the impact of science, and must soon be altered out of all recognition by it.' ' The . . . alternative to the grime of the outworn past is to consider things not as the concretions of other men's thoughts and feelings about them, but as agents which produce effects in the world . . . The scientific attitude does not in the slightest deny the emotional effects produced on men by their experience; what it tries to do is to classify the mechanisms by which these effects were produced. Some will be more, some less, and some very little, dependent on associations inherited from the culture of the past.' Even if it is thought that there is too strong a tendency here to reject the cultural associations of the past, it must be allowed that only by some such process of analysis is it possible to sift the more valuable associations from the less valuable; and it allows us better to see things and people as they *might* be. Architects in particular, he says, among the artists have implicitly accepted this point of view, and so have come nearer to the scientists.

However, in sifting the older meanings and associations (whether consciously or unconsciously) the growth of science has been associated with the decay of traditions on which people have formerly relied. The resulting aimlessness, the breakdown of cultural standards and traditional patterns of life is a problem ' probably just as important as economic inefficiency . . . If the general scientific attitude (is to provide) a new and satisfactory basis for social relations, this disintegration of the old basis on which

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civilization has rested in the past is a matter for it to attend to.' Its justification of its ability to do this lies (as Dr. Lynd also considered) in its possession of an adequate code of values. ' Science derives its idea of what is a valuable result from its knowledge of the nature and behaviour of things . . . The scientist's idea of value is much more relative and restricted than the philosopher's. It does not pretend to be ' the Good ' from any absolute and final point of view. It is merely the good from the point of view of what is going on now . . . Observation of the course of man's evolution from the animals, and of the historical development of the human personality, provides a criterion by which we can decide between advance and retreat; it gives direction.'[1]

Here, then, are his standards. Science has ' an ethos based on the recognition that one belongs to a community, but a community which requires that one should do one's damnedest to pick holes in its beliefs. I know of no other resolution of the contradiction between freedom and order which is so successful in retaining the full values of both.' These standards are not quite those of Dr. Lynd but they are precisely formulated—much more precisely formulated than one is accustomed to find (or not to find) in contemporary books on scientific planning. The point at issue here is not so much whether one approves, or not; that is another, and personal matter. I find that I can have mixed feelings about this (for instance, it is difficult to be happy about the mixture of contemporary romantic features which, at the end of the book, Dr. Waddington finds tolerable) and yet approve of the type of approach which can see these problems of means and ends fairly clearly and face them in more precise terms than has been usual. It is on these lines that the very necessary suggestions of scientists and other experts are to be judged by non-experts, and for this reason (as well as to show what I feel to be hopeful signs of awareness of human problems) I have quoted more fully than is usual. Not until experts come to have a clearer vision of the uses to which their knowledge can, and should, be placed can we hope to regain ' faith in the distinctly human attributes of man, namely, the free critical

[1]Further discussion of this point will be found in an article by Dr. Waddington in *Nature,* Sept. 6th, 1941, p. 270 (*The Relations between Science and Ethics*)—with comments by other writers.

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intelligence and the capacity for mutual respect' (Stapledon, *Philosophy and Living*, Pelican Books, 1939). Dr. Lynd and Dr. Waddington show unusual signs of a realization of this human need for a clear, though constantly changing (*i.e., growing*), conception of ends in view.

C. E. LUCAS.

*Editorial*: NOTE ON REVIEWING.

We have to apologize both to readers and publishers for unkept undertakings in the matter of reviewing. Some holding-over has been unavoidable. The problem of getting reviewing done becomes more difficult as our reviewers become more involved in other preoccupations. Those in the Forces are especially apt to find it impossible to produce 'copy' by a given date.

There are, of course, other difficulties about maintaining a full and balanced review section. On the one hand, the season's output of books is beginning to offer a decidedly restricted choice. On the other hand, our active reviewing connexion is sadly depleted; there are books that we consider it our business to review, but know we can't provide for.

Here (rather at random) are a few books we should like to have noticed and which may, in the still considerable output of the past year, have been missed by some readers: *The Lion and the Unicorn*, by George Orwell; *Is Innocence Enough?*, by D. W. Brogan; *Berlin Diary*, by William Shirer; *Under the Iron Heel*, by Lars Moen; *Pattern of Conquest*, by Joseph C. Harsch (the last three by American journalists or observers).

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*The Impulse to Dominate*, by D. W. Harding (Allen and Unwin, 7/6) incorporates a contribution that appeared in *Scrutiny*.

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